

MY CHILDHOOD AND BOYHOOD

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CHILDHOOD

CHAPTER I

THE TUTOR KARL IVANITCH

ON the 12th of August, 18—, the third day after my birthday when I had attained the age of ten, and had received many wonderful presents, Karl Ivanitch woke me at seven o'clock in the morning by striking at a fly directly above my head, with a flapper made of paper and fastened to a stick. He used the flapper so awkwardly that he entangled it with the image of my angel, which hung against the oaken headboard of the bed ; and the dead fly fell straight upon my head. I thrust my nose out from under the coverlet, steadied the image, which was still rocking, with my hand, flung the dead fly on the floor, and regarded Karl Ivanitch with angry although sleepy eyes. But attired in his motley wadded dressing-gown, girded with a belt of the same material, a red knitted skull-cap with a tassel, and soft goatskin shoes, he pursued his course along the walls, catching on things and flapping away.

"Suppose I am little," I thought, "why should he worry me? Why doesn't he kill the flies round Volodya's bed? There are quantities of them there. No: Volodya is older than I; I am the youngest of all; and that is why he torments me. He thinks of nothing else in life," I whispered, "except how he may do unpleasant things to me. Yes, he knows well enough that he has woke me

up and frightened me; but he pretends not to see it—the hateful man! And his dressing-gown, and his cap, and his tassel—how disgusting!”

As I was thus mentally expressing my vexation with Karl Ivanitch, he approached his own bed, glanced at his watch, which hung above it in a slipper embroidered with glass beads, hung his flapper on a nail, and turned towards us, evidently in the most agreeable frame of mind.

“Get up, children, get up. It’s time! Your mother is already in the drawing-room!”* he cried in his kindly German voice; then he came over to me, sat down at my feet, and pulled his snuff-box from his pocket. I pretended to be asleep. First Karl Ivanitch took a pinch of snuff, wiped his nose, cracked his fingers, and then turned his attention to me. He began to tickle my heels, laughing the while. “Come, come, lazybones,” he said.

Much as I dreaded tickling, I neither sprang out of bed nor made any reply, but buried my head deeper under the pillow, kicked with all my might, and used every effort to keep from laughing.

“How good he is, and how he loves us, and yet I could think so badly of him!” I reflected.

I was vexed at myself and at Karl Ivanitch; I wanted to laugh and to cry; my nerves were upset.

“Oh, let me alone, Karl Ivanitch!” I cried, with tears in my eyes, thrusting my head out from beneath the pillow. Karl Ivanitch was surprised; he left my soles in peace, and began quietly to inquire what was the matter with me: had I had a bad dream? His kind German face, the sympathy with which he strove to divine the cause of my tears, caused them to flow more abundantly. I was ashamed; and I could not understand how, a moment before, I had been unable to love Karl Ivanitch, and had thought his dressing-gown,

* Karl Ivanitch generally speaks in German.

cap and tassel disgusting: now, on the contrary, they all seemed to me to be extremely pleasing, and even the tassel appeared a plain proof of his goodness. I told him that I was crying because I had had a bad dream,—I thought mamma was dead, and they were carrying her away to bury her. I invented all this, for I really did not know what I had been dreaming that night; but when Karl Ivanitch, touched by my tale, began to comfort and soothe me, it seemed to me that I actually had seen that dreadful vision, and my tears flowed from another cause.

When Karl Ivanitch left me, and, sitting up in bed, I began to draw my stockings upon my little legs, my tears ceased in some measure; but gloomy thoughts of the fictitious dream did not leave me. Dyadka* Nikolai came in—a small, neat little man, who was always serious, precise, and respectful, and a great friend of Karl Ivanitch. He brought our clothes and shoes; Volodya had boots, but I still had those intolerable slippers with ribbons. I was ashamed to cry before him; besides, the morning sun was shining cheerfully in at the window, and Volodya was imitating Marya Ivanovna (my sisters' governess), and laughing so loudly and merrily as he stood over the wash-basin, that even grave Nikolai, with towel on shoulder, the soap in one hand, and a hand-basin in the other, smiled and said:

"Enough, Vladimir Petrovitch, please wash yourself." I became quite cheerful.

"Are you nearly ready?" called Karl Ivanitch's voice from the schoolroom.

His voice was stern, and had no longer that kindly accent which had moved me to tears. In the schoolroom Karl Ivanitch was another man: he was the tutor. I dressed quickly, washed, and with brush in hand, still smoothing my wet hair, I appeared at his call.

* Children's valet.

Karl Ivanitch, with spectacles on nose, and a book in his hand, was sitting in his usual place, between the door and the window. To the left of the door were two shelves of books: one was ours—the children's; the other was Karl Ivanitch's particular property. On ours were all sorts of books—school-books and others: some stood upright, others were lying down. Only two big volumes of "*Histoire des Voyages*," in red bindings, leaned in a stately way against the wall; then came long, thick, big, and little books—covers without books, and books without covers. All were piled up and pushed in when we were ordered to put the library, as Karl Ivanitch called this shelf, in order before our play-hour. If the collection of books on his private shelf was not as large as ours, it was even more miscellaneous. I remember three of them—a German pamphlet on the manuring of cabbage-gardens, without a cover; one volume of the history of the "Seven Years' War," in parchment, burned at one corner; and a complete course of hydrostatics. Karl Ivanitch passed the greater part of his time in reading, and even injured his eyesight thereby; but he never read anything except these books and "*The Northern Bee*."

Among the articles which lay on Karl Ivanitch's shelf was one which recalls him to me more than all the rest. It was a circle of cardboard fixed on a wooden foot, upon which it revolved by means of pegs. Upon this circle were pasted pictures representing caricatures of some gentlemen and a wig-maker. Karl Ivanitch pasted very well, and had himself invented and manufactured this circle in order to protect his weak eyes from the bright light.

I seem now to see before me his long figure, in its wadded dressing-gown, and the red cap beneath which his thin gray hair is visible. • He sits beside a little table, upon which stands the circle with the

wig-maker, casting its shadow upon his face ; in one hand he holds a book, the other rests on the arm of the chair ; beside him lies his watch, with the huntsman painted on the face, his checked handkerchief, his round black snuff-box, his green spectacle-case, and the snuffers on the dish. All this lies with so much dignity and precision, each in its proper place, that one might conclude from his orderliness alone that Karl Ivanitch has a pure conscience and a restful spirit.

If you stole upstairs on tiptoe to the schoolroom, after running about downstairs in the hall as much as you pleased, behold—Karl Ivanitch was sitting alone in his arm-chair, reading some one of his beloved books, with a proud, calm expression of countenance. Sometimes I found him at such times when he was not reading : his spectacles had dropped down on his big aquiline nose ; his blue, half-shut eyes had a certain peculiar expression ; and his lips smiled sadly. All was quiet in the room : his even breathing, and the ticking of the hunter-adorned watch, alone were audible.

He did not perceive me ; and I used to stand in the door, and think : Poor, poor old man ! There are many of us ; we play, we are merry ; but he—he is all alone, and no one treats him kindly. He tells the truth, when he says he is an orphan. And the history of his life is terrible ! I remember that he related it to Nikolai : it is dreadful to be in his situation ! And it made me so sorry, that one wanted to go to him, take his hand, and say, "Dear Karl Ivanitch !" He liked to have me say that : he always petted me, and it was plain that he was touched.

On the other wall hung maps, nearly all of them torn, but skilfully repaired by the hand of Karl Ivanitch. On the third wall, in the middle of which was the door leading downstairs, hung two rulers : one was all hacked up—that was ours ;

the other—the new one—was his own private ruler, and employed more for encouraging us than for ruling proper. On the other side of the door was a blackboard, upon which our grand misdeeds were designated by circles, and our small ones by crosses. To the left of the board was the corner where we were put on our knees.

How well I remember that corner ! I remember the stove door, and the slide in it, and the noise this made when it was turned. You would kneel and kneel in that corner until your knees and back ached, and you would think, "Karl Ivanitch has forgotten me ; he must be sitting quietly in his soft arm-chair, and reading his hydrostatics : and how is it with me ? " And then you would begin to hint of your existence, to softly open and shut the damper, or pick the plaster from the wall ; but if too big a piece suddenly fell noisily to the floor, the fright alone was worse than the whole punishment. You would peep round at Karl Ivanitch ; and there he sat, book in hand, as though he had not noticed anything.

In the middle of the room stood a table, covered with a ragged black oil-cloth, beneath which the edge, hacked in places with penknives, was visible in many places. Around the table stood several unpainted stools, polished with long use. The last wall was occupied by three little windows. This was the view which was had from them : Directly in front of the windows ran the road, every hollow, pebble, and rut of which had long been familiar and dear to me ; beyond the road was a close-trimmed linden alley, behind which the wattled fence was visible here and there. A field could be seen through the alley ; on one side of this was a threshing-floor, on the other a wood ; the guard's little cottage was visible in the distance. To the right, a portion of the terrace was discernible where the grown-up people generally sat before dinner. If you looked in that direction while

Karl Ivanitch was correcting your page of dictation, you could see mamma's black head, and someone's back, and hear faint sounds of conversation and laughter; and you would grow vexed that you could not be there, and think, "When I grow up, shall I stop learning lessons, and sit, not over conversations for ever, but always with those I love?" Vexation increases to sorrow; and God knows why and what you dream, until you hear Karl Ivanitch raging over your mistakes.

Karl Ivanitch took off his dressing-gown, put on his blue swallow-tailed coat with humps and folds upon the shoulders, arranged his necktie before the glass, and led us downstairs to say good morning to mamma.

CHAPTER II

MAMMA

MAMMA was sitting in the parlour, and pouring out the tea: in one hand she held the teapot, in the other the faucet of the *samovar*, from which the water flowed over the top of the teapot upon the tray beneath. But though she was gazing steadily at it, she did not perceive it, nor that we had entered.

So many memories of the past present themselves when one tries to revive in fancy the features of a beloved being, that one views them dimly through these memories, as through tears. These are the tears of imagination. When I try to recall my mother as she was at that time, nothing appears to me but her brown eyes, which always expressed love and goodness; the mole on her neck a little lower down than the spot where the short hairs grow; her white embroidered collar; her cool, soft hand, which petted me so often, and which I so often kissed; but her image as a whole escapes me.

To the left of the divan stood the old English grand piano; and before the piano sat my dark-complexioned sister Liubotchka, playing Clementi's studies with evident effort, and with rosy fingers which had just been washed in cold water. She was eleven. She wore a short linen dress with white lace-trimmed pantalettes, and could only manage an octave as an arpeggio. Beside her, half turned away, sat Marya Ivanovna, in a cap with rose-colored ribbons, a blue jacket, and a red and angry face, which assumed a still more for-

bidding expression when Karl Ivanitch entered. She looked threateningly at him ; and, without responding to his salute, she continued to count, and beat time with her foot, *one, two, three*, more loudly and commandingly than before.

Karl Ivanitch, paying no attention whatever to this, according to his custom, went straight to kiss my mother's hand with a German greeting. She recovered herself, shook her little head as though desirous of driving away painful thoughts with the gesture, gave her hand to Karl Ivanitch, and kissed him on his wrinkled temple, while he kissed her hand.

"Thank you, my dear Karl Ivanitch." And continuing to speak in German, she inquired :

"Did the children sleep well ? "

Karl Ivanitch was deaf in one ear, and now heard nothing at all on account of the noise from the piano. He bent over the divan, rested one hand on the table as he stood on one foot ; and with a smile which seemed to me then the height of refinement, he raised his cap above his head, and said :

"Will you excuse me, Natalya Nikolaevna ? "

Karl Ivanitch, for the sake of not catching cold in his bald head, never took off his red cap ; but each time he entered the drawing-room he begged permission to keep it on.

"Put on your cap, Karl Ivanitch. . . . I ask you if the children slept well ? " said mamma, moving nearer to him, and speaking louder.

But again he heard nothing, covered his bald spot with his red cap, and smiled more amiably than ever.

"Stop a minute, Mimi," said mamma to Marya Ivanovna with a smile : "we can hear nothing."

Beautiful as was mamma's face, it became incomparably more lovely when she smiled, and seemed to enliven everything about her. If in life's trying moments I could catch but a glimpse of that smile, I should not know what grief is. It seems to

me that what is called beauty of face consists in the smile alone : if it does not alter the countenance, then the latter is ordinary ; if it spoils it, then it is bad.

When greeting me, mamma took my head in both her hands, and bent it back, looking intently at me, and said :

“ You have been crying this morning ? ”

I made no reply. She kissed me on the eyes, and asked in German :

“ What were you crying about ? ”

When she spoke pleasantly to us, she always addressed us in that tongue, which she knew to perfection.

“ I cried in my sleep, mamma,” I said, recalling my fictitious dream with all the details, and I involuntarily shuddered at the thought.

Karl Ivanitch confirmed my statement, but held his peace about the dream. After discussing the weather, in which conversation Mimi also took part, mamma laid six pieces of sugar on the tray for some of the favored servants, and went to her embroidery-frame which stood in the window.

“ Now go to your father, children, and tell him that he must come to me without fail before he goes to threshing-floor.”

The music, counting, and black looks began again, and we went to papa. Passing through the room which had borne the title of the butler's pantry since grandfather's time, we entered the study.

CHAPTER III

PAPA

HE was standing by his writing-table, and pointing to some envelopes, papers, and bundles of bank-notes. He was angry, and was discussing something sharply with the overseer, Jakov Mikhailof, who, standing in his usual place, between the door and the barometer, with his hands behind him, was moving his fingers with great vivacity in various directions.

The angrier papa grew, the more swiftly did the fingers move, and on the contrary, when papa ceased speaking, the fingers also stopped ; but when Jakov began to talk himself, his fingers underwent the greatest disturbance, and jumped wildly about on all sides. It seemed to me that Jakov's secret thoughts might be guessed from their movements : but his face was always quiet ; it expressed a sense of his own dignity and at the same time of subordination, that is to say, " I am right, but nevertheless have your own way ! "

When papa saw us, he merely said :

" Wait, I'll be with you presently."

And he nodded his head towards the door, to indicate that one of us was to shut it.

" Ah, merciful God ! what's to be done with you now, Jakov ? " he went on, speaking to the overseer, shrugging his shoulders (which was a habit with him). " This envelope with an enclosure of eight hundred roubles . . . "

Jakov moved his abacus, counted off eight hundred roubles, fixed his gaze on some indefinite point, and waited for what was coming next.

"Is for the expenses of the farming during my absence. Do you understand? From the mill you are to receive one thousand roubles: is that so, or not? You are to receive back eight thousand worth of loans from the treasury; for the hay, of which, according to your own calculation, you can sell seven thousand poods,*—at forty-five kopeks, I will say,—you will get three thousand: consequently, how much money will you have in all? Twelve thousand: is that so, or not?"

"Exactly, sir," said Jakov.

But I perceived from the briskness with which his fingers moved, that he wanted to answer back: papa interrupted him.

"Now, out of this money, you will send ten thousand roubles to the council at Petrovskoe. Now, the money which is in the office" continued papa (Jakov mixed up this twelve thousand, and told off twenty-one thousand), "you will bring to me, and charge to expenses on this present date." (Jakov shook up his abacus again, and turned it, indicating thereby, it is probable, that the twenty-one thousand would disappear also). "And this envelope containing money you will forward from me to its address."

I was standing near the table, and I glanced at the inscription. It read: "Karl Ivanitch Mauer."

Papa must have perceived that I had read what it was not necessary that I should know; for he laid his hand on my shoulder, and with a slight movement indicated that I was to go away from his table. I did not understand whether it was a caress or a hint; but, whatever it meant, I kissed the large, sinewy hand which rested on my shoulder.

"Yes, sir," said Jakov. "And what are your orders with regard to the Khabarovka money?"

Khabarovka was mamma's village.

"Leave it in the office, and on no account make use of it without my orders."

A *pood* is about forty pounds.

Jakov remained silent for a few seconds, then his fingers twisted about with increased rapidity, and altering the expression of servile stupidity with which he had listened to his master's orders, to the expression of bold cunning which was natural to him, he drew the abacus towards him, and began to speak.

"Permit me to report, Piotr Alexandritch, that it shall be as you please, but it is impossible to pay the council on time. You said," he continued, his speech broken with pauses, "that we must receive money from the loans, from the mill, and from the hay." As he mentioned these statistics, he calculated them on the abacus. "I am afraid that we may be making some mistake in our reckoning," he added after a pause, glancing sharply at papa.

"How?"

"Please to consider: with regard to the mill, since the miller has been to me twice to ask for delay, and has sworn by Christ the Lord that he has no money . . . and he is here now. Will you not please to talk with him yourself?"

"What does he say?" asked papa, signifying by a motion of his head that he did not wish to speak with the miller.

"The same old story. He says that there was no grinding; that what little money he got, he put into the dam. If we take him away, sir, will it be of any advantage to us? With regard to the loans, as you were pleased to mention them, I think I have already reported that our money is sunk there, and we shall not be able to get at it very soon. I sent a load of flour into the city a few days ago, to Ivan Afanasitch, with a note about the matter; he replied that he would be glad to exert himself in Piotr Alexandrovitch's behalf, but the affair is not in my hands, and you will hardly receive your quittance under two months. You were pleased to speak of the hay: suppose it does sell for three thousand."

He marked off three thousand on his abacus, and remained silent for a moment, glancing first at his calculating frame and then at papa's eyes, as much as to say :

" You see yourself how little it is. Yes, and we will chaffer about the hay again if it is to be sold now you will please to understand."

It was plain that he had a great store of arguments : it must have been for that reason that papa interrupted him.

" I shall make no change in my arrangements," he said ; " but if any delay should actually occur in receiving this money, then there is nothing to be done ; you will take what is necessary from the Khabarovka funds."

" Yes, sir."

It was evident from the expression of Jakob's face and fingers, that this last order afforded him the greatest satisfaction.

Jakov was a serf, and a very zealous and devoted man. Like all good overseers, he was extremely parsimonious on his master's account, and entertained the strangest possible ideas as to what was for his master's interest. He was eternally fretting over the increase of his master's property at the expense of that of his mistress, and tried to demonstrate that it was indispensable to employ all the revenue from her estate upon Petrovskoe (the village in which we lived). He was triumphant at the present moment, because he had succeeded on this point.

Papa greeted us, and said that it was time to put a stop to our idleness : we were no longer small children, and it was time for us to study seriously.

" I think you already know that I am going to Moscow to-night, and I shall take you with me," he said. " You will live with your grandmother, and mamma will remain here with the girls. And you know that she will have but one consolation--

to hear that you are studying well, and that they are pleased with you."

Although we had been expecting something unusual, from the preparations which had been making for several days, this news surprised us terribly. Volodya turned red, and repeated mamma's message in a trembling voice.

"So that is what my dream foretold," I thought. "God grant there may be nothing worse!"

I was very, very sorry for mamma; and, at the same time, the thought that we were grown up afforded me pleasure.

"If we are going away to-night, we surely shall have no lessons. That's famous," I thought. "But I'm sorry for Karl Ivanovitch. He is certainly going to be discharged, otherwise that envelope would not have been prepared for him. It would be better to go on studying for ever, and not go away, and not part from mamma, and not hurt poor Karl Ivanitch's feelings. He is so very unhappy!"

These thoughts flashed through my mind. I did not stir from the spot, and gazed intently at the black ribbons in my slippers.

After speaking a few words to Karl Ivanitch about the fall of the barometer, and giving orders to Jakov not to feed the dogs, in order that he might go out after dinner and make a farewell trial of the young hounds, papa, contrary to my expectations, sent us to our studies, comforting us, however, with a promise to take us to the hunt.

On the way upstairs, I ran out on the terrace. Papa's favorite greyhound, Milka, lay blinking in the sunshine at the door.

"Milotchka," I said, petting her and kissing her nose, "we are going away to-day: good-bye! We shall never see each other again."

My feelings overpowered me, and I burst into tears

CHAPTER IV

LESSONS

KARL IVANITCH was very much out of sorts. This was evident from his frowning brows, and from the way he flung his coat into the *commode*, his angry manner of tying his girdle, and the deep mark which he made with his nail in the conversation-book to indicate the point which we must attain. Volodya studied properly; but my mind was so upset that I positively could do nothing. I gazed long and stupidly at the conversation-book, but I could not read for the tears which gathered in my eyes at the thought of the parting before us. When the time for recitation came, Karl Ivanitch listened with his eyes half shut (which was a bad sign); and just at the place where one says, "Where do you come from?" and the other answers, "I come from the coffee-house," I could no longer restrain my tears; and sobs prevented my uttering, "Have you not read the paper?" When it came to writing, I made such blots with my tears falling on the paper, that I might have been writing with water on wrapping-paper.

Karl Ivanitch became angry; he put me on his knees, declared that it was obstinacy, a puppet comedy (this was a favorite expression of his), threatened me with the ruler, and demanded that I should beg his pardon, although I could not utter a word for my tears. He must have recognized his injustice at length, for he went into Nikolai's room and slammed the door.

The conversation in Dyadka's room was audible in the schoolroom.

"You have heard, Nikolai, that the children are going to Moscow?" said Karl Ivanitch as he entered.

"Certainly, I have heard that."

Nikolai must have made a motion to rise, for Karl Ivanitch said, "Sit still, Nikolai!" and then he shut the door. I emerged from the corner, and went to listen at the door.

"However much good you do to people, however much you are attached to them, gratitude is not to be expected, apparently, Nikolai," said Karl Ivanitch with feeling.

Nikolai, who was sitting at the window at his shoemaking, nodded his head affirmatively.

"I have lived in this house twelve years, and I can say before God, Nikolai," continued Karl Ivanitch, raising his eyes and his snuff-box to the ceiling, "that I have loved them, and taken more interest in them than if they had been my own children. You remember, Nikolai, when Volodenka had the fever, how I sat by his bedside, and never closed my eyes for nine days. Yes; then I was good, dear Karl Ivanitch; then I was necessary. But now," he added with an ironical smile, "*now the children are grown up; they must study in earnest.* Just as if they were not learning anything here, Nikolai!"

"So they are to study more, it seems?" said Nikolai, laying down his awl, and drawing out his thread with both hands.

"Yes: I am no longer needed, I must be driven off. But where are their promises? Where is their gratitude? I revere and love Natalya Nikolaevna, Nikolai," said he, laying his hand on his Breast. "But what is she? Her will is of no more consequence in this house than that;" hereupon he flung a scrap of leather on the floor with an expressive gesture. "I know whose doing this

is, and why I am no longer needed ; because I don't lie, and pretend not to see things, like *some people*. I have always been accustomed to speak the truth to everyone," said he proudly. "God be with them ! They won't accumulate wealth by getting rid of me ; and God is merciful—I shall find a bit of bread for myself, . . . shall I not, Nikolai ? "

Nikolai raised his head and looked at Karl Ivanitch, as though desirous of assuring himself whether he really would be able to find a bit of bread ; but he said nothing.

Karl Ivanitch talked much and long in this strain. He said they had been more capable of appreciating his services at a certain general's house, where he had formerly lived (I was much pained to hear it). He spoke of Saxony, of his parents, of his friend the tailor, Schönheit, and so forth, and so forth.

I sympathized with his sorrow, and it pained me that papa and Karl Ivanitch, whom I loved almost equally, did not understand each other. I betook myself to my corner again, crouched down on my heels, and pondered how I might bring about an understanding between them.

When Karl Ivanitch returned to the schoolroom, he ordered me to get up, and prepare my copy-book for writing from dictation. When all was ready, he seated himself majestically in his arm-chair, and in a voice which appeared to issue from some great depth, he began to dictate as follows :

" ' Of all pas-sions the most re-volt-ing is, ' have you written that ? ' " Here he paused, slowly took a pinch of snuff, and continued with renewed energy — " ' the most revolting is In-gra-ti-tude ' . . . a capital *I*."

I looked at him after writing the last word, in expectation of more.

" Period," said he, with a barely perceptible smile, and made me a sign to give him my copy-book.

He read this apothegm, which gave utterance to

his inward sentiment, through several times, with various intonations, and with an expression of the greatest satisfaction. Then he set us a lesson in history, and seated himself by the window. His face was not so morose as it had been ; it expressed the delight of a man who had taken a proper revenge for an insult that had been put upon him.

It was quarter to one ; but Karl Ivanitch had no idea of dismissing us, apparently : in fact, he gave out some new lessons.

Ennui and hunger increased in equal measure. With the greatest impatience, I noted all the signs which betokened the near approach of dinner. There came the woman with her mop to wash the plates ; then I could hear the dishes rattle on the sideboard. I heard them move the table, and place the chairs ; then Mimi came in from the garden with Liubotchka and Katenka (Katenka was Mimi's twelve-year-old daughter) ; but nothing was to be seen of Foka, the butler, who always came and announced that dinner was ready. Then only could we throw aside our books without paying any attention to Karl Ivanitch, and run downstairs.

Then footsteps were audible on the stairs, but that was not Foka ! I knew his step by heart, and could always recognize the squeak of his boots. The door opened, and a figure which was totally unknown to me appeared.

CHAPTER V

THE FOOL

INTO the room walked a man of fifty, with a long, pale, pock-marked face, with long gray hair and a sparse reddish beard. He was of such vast height, that in order to pass through the door, he was obliged to bend not only his head, but his whole body. He wore a ragged garment which resembled both a caftan and a cassock ; in his hand he carried a huge staff. As he entered the room, he smote the floor with it with all his might ; opening his mouth, and wrinkling his brows, he laughed in a terrible and unnatural manner. He was blind of one eye ; and the white pupil of that eye hopped about incessantly, and imparted to his otherwise homely countenance a still more repulsive expression.

"Aha ! I've found you !" he shouted, running up to Volodya with little steps : he seized his head, and began a careful examination of his crown. Then, with a perfectly serious expression, he left him, walked up to the table, and began to blow under the oil-cloth, and to make the sign of the cross over it. "O-oh, it's a pity ! o-oh, it's sad ! The dear children . . . will fly away," he said, in a voice quivering with tears, gazing feelingly at Volodya ; and he began to wipe away the tears which were actually falling, with his sleeve.

His voice was coarse and hoarse ; his movements hasty and rough ; his talk was silly and incoherent (he never used any pronouns) ; but his intonations were so touching, and his grotesque yellow face

assumed at times such a frankly sorrowful expression, that, in listening to him, it was impossible to refrain from a feeling of mingled pity, fear, and grief. This was the fool and pilgrim Grischa.

Whence was he? Who were his parents? What had induced him to adopt the singular life which he led? No one knew. I only knew that he had passed since the age of fifteen as a fool who went barefoot winter and summer, visited the monasteries, gave little images to those who struck his fancy, and uttered enigmatic words which some people accepted as prophecy; that no one had ever known him in any other aspect; that he occasionally went to grandmother's; and that some said he was the unfortunate son of wealthy parents, and a genuine fool; while others held that he was a simple peasant and lazy.

At length the long-wished-for and punctual Foka arrived, and we went downstairs. Grischa, who continued to sob and talk all sorts of nonsense, followed us, and pounded every step on the stairs with his staff. Papa and mamma entered the drawing-room arm in arm, discussing something in a low tone. Marya Ivanovna was sitting with much dignity in one of the arm-chairs, symmetrically arranged at right angles close to the divan, and giving instructions in a stern, repressed voice to the girls who sat beside her. As soon as Karl Ivanitch entered the room, she glanced at him, but immediately turned away; and her face assumed an expression which might have been interpreted to mean: "I do not see you, Karl Ivanitch." It was plain from the girl's eyes, that they were very anxious to impart to us some extremely important news as soon as possible; but it would have been an infringement of Mimi's rules to jump up and come to us. We must first go to her, and say, "*Bonjour, Mimi!*" and give a scrape with the foot; and then it was permissible to enter into conversation.

What an intolerable creature that Mimi was! It was impossible to talk about anything in her presence: she considered everything improper. Moreover, she was constantly exhorting us to speak French, and that, as if out of malice, just when we wanted to chatter in Russian; or at dinner—you would just begin to enjoy a dish, and want to be left alone, when she would infallibly say, "Eat that with bread," or "How are you holding your fork?"—"What business is it of hers?" you think. "Let her teach her girls, but Karl Ivanitch is there to see to us." I fully shared his hatred for *some people*.

"Ask mamma to take us to the hunt," whispered Katenka, stopping me by seizing my round jacket, when the grown-up people had passed on before into the dining-room.

"Very good: we will try."

Grischa ate in the dining-room, but at a small table apart; he did not raise his eyes from his plate, made fearful grimaces, sighed occasionally, and said, as though speaking to himself: "It's a pity . . . she* has flown away . . . the dove will fly to heaven. . . . Oh, there's a stone on the grave!" and so on.

Mamma had been in a troubled state of mind ever since the morning; Grischa's presence, words, and behaviour, evidently increased this perturbation.

"Ah, I nearly forgot to ask you about one thing," she said, handing papa a plate of soup.

"What is it?"

"Please have your dreadful dogs shut up: they came near biting poor Grischa when he passed through the yard. And they might attack the children."

* It is indispensable to the sense in English to employ pronouns, occasionally. This may be considered a specimen of Grischa's prophecy, the pronoun being indicated by the termination of the verb.

Hearing himself mentioned, Grischa turned towards the table, and began to exhibit the torn tails of his garment, and to speak with his mouth full.

"They wanted to bite to death. . . . God did not allow it. . . . It's a sin to set the dogs on! Don't beat the bolschak* . . . why beat? God forgives—times are different now."

"What's that he's saying?" asked papa, gazing sternly and intently at him. "I don't understand a word."

"But I understand," answered mamma: "he is telling me that some huntsman set his dogs on him, on purpose, as he says, 'that they might bite him to death,' and he begs you not to punish the man for it."

"Ah! that's it," said papa. "How does he know that I mean to punish the huntsman? You know that I'm not over-fond of these gentlemen," he added in French, "and this one in particular does not please me, and ought—"

"Ah, do not say that, my dear," interrupted mamma, as if frightened at something. "What do you know about him?"

"It seems to me that I have had occasion to learn these people's ways by heart: enough of them come to you. They're all of one sort. It's for ever and eternally the same story."

It was plain that mamma held a totally different opinion on this point, but she would not dispute.

"Please give me a patty," said she. "Are they good to-day?"

"Yes, it makes me angry," went on papa, taking a patty in his hand, but holding it at such a distance that mamma could not reach it; "it makes me angry, when I see sensible and cultivated people fall into the trap."

And he struck the table with his fork.

"I asked you to hand me a patty," she repeated, reaching out her hand.

* Elder of a village, family, or religious community.

"And they do well," continued papa, moving his hand farther away, "when they arrest such people. The only good they do is to upset the weak nerves of certain individuals," he added with a smile, perceiving that the conversation greatly displeased mamma, and gave her the patty.

"I have only one remark to make to you on the subject: it is difficult to believe that a man, who in spite of his sixty years, goes barefoot summer and winter, and wears chains weighing two poods, which he never takes off, under his clothes, and who has more than once rejected a proposal to lead an easy life—it is difficult to believe that such a man does all this from laziness."

"As for prophecy," she added, with a sigh, after a pause, "I have paid for my belief; I think I have told you how Kiriusha foretold the very day and hour of papa's death."

"Ah, what have you done to me!" exclaimed papa, smiling and putting his hand to his mouth on the side where Mimi sat. (When he did this, I always listened with strained attention, in the expectation of something amusing.) "Why have you reminded me of his feet? I have looked at them, and now I shall not be able to eat anything."

The dinner was nearing its end. Liubotchka and Katenka winked at us incessantly, twisted on their chairs, and evinced the greatest uneasiness. The winks signified: "Why don't you ask them to take us hunting?" I nudged Volodya with my elbow; Volodya nudged me, and finally summoned up his courage: he explained, at first in a timid voice, but afterwards quite firmly and loudly, that, as we were to leave on that day, we should like to have the girls taken to the hunt with us, in the carriage. After a short consultation among the grown-up people, the question was decided in our favour; and, what was still more pleasant, mamma said that she would go with us herself.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATIONS FOR THE HUNT

DURING dessert, Jakov was summoned, and received orders with regard to the carriage, the dogs, and the saddle-horses—all being given with the greatest minuteness, and every horse specified by name. Volodya's horse was lame: papa ordered the hunter to be saddled for him. This word "hunter" always sounded strange in mamma's ears: it seemed to her that it must be something in the nature of a wild beast, and that it would infallibly run away with and kill Volodya. In spite of the exhortations of papa and of Volodya, who with wonderful boldness asserted that that was nothing, and that he liked to have the horse run away extremely, poor mamma continued to declare that she should be in torments during the whole of the excursion.

Dinner came to an end; the big people went to the library to drink their coffee, while we ran into the garden, to scrape our feet along the paths covered with the yellow leaves which had fallen, and to talk. The conversation began on the subject of Volodya riding the hunter, and how shameful it was that Liubotchka ran more softly than Katenka, and how interesting it would be to see Grischa's chains, and so on: not a word was said about our separation. Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the carriage, upon each of whose springs sat a servant boy. Behind the carriage came the huntsmen with the dogs; and behind the huntsmen, Ignat the coach-

man, on the horse destined for Volodya, and leading my old nag by the bridle. First we rushed to the fence, whence all these interesting things were visible, and then we flew upstairs shrieking and stamping, to dress ourselves as much like huntsmen as possible. One of the chief means to this end was tucking our trousers into our boots. We betook ourselves to this without delay, making haste to complete the operation, and run out upon the steps to enjoy the sight of the dogs and horses, and the conversation with the huntsmen.

The day was warm. White clouds of fanciful forms had been hovering all the morning on the horizon; then the little breezes drove them nearer and nearer, so that they obscured the sun from time to time. But black and frequent as were these clouds, it was plain that they were not destined to gather into a thunder-storm, and spoil our enjoyment on our last opportunity. Towards evening they began to disperse again: some grew pale, lengthened out, and fled to the horizon; others, just overhead, turned into white transparent scales; only one large black cloud lingered in the east. Karl Ivanitch always knew where every sort of cloud went; he declared that this cloud would go to Maslovka, and there would be no rain, and that the weather would be fine.

Foka, in spite of his advanced years, ran down the steps very quickly and cleverly, cried, "Drive up!" and, planting his feet far apart, stood firm in the middle of the entrance, between the spot to which the carriage should be brought, and the threshold, in the attitude of a man who does not need to be reminded of his duty. The ladies followed, and after a brief dispute as to who should sit on which side, and whom they should cling to (although it seemed to me quite unnecessary to hold on), they seated themselves, opened their parasols, and drove off. When the lineika*

A particular sort of four-seated drozhky.

started, mamma pointed to the hunter, and asked the coachman in a trembling voice :

"Is that the horse for Vladimir Petrovitch ? "

And when the coachman replied in the affirmative she waved her hand and turned away. I was very impatient : I mounted my horse, looked straight between his ears, and went through various evolutions in the court-yard.

"Please not to crush the dogs," said one of the huntsmen.

"Rest easy ; this is not my first experience," I answered proudly.

Volodya mounted the hunter, not without some quaking in spite of his resolution of character, and asked several times as he patted him :

"Is he gentle ? "

He looked very handsome on horseback—just like a grown-up person. His thighs sat so well on the saddle that I was envious—particularly as, so far as I could judge from my shadow, I was far from presenting so fine an appearance.

Then we heard papa's step on the stairs : the overseer of the young dogs drove up the scattered hounds ; the huntsmen with greyhounds called in theirs, and began to mount. The groom led the horse to the steps ; papa's leash of dogs, which had been lying about in various picturesque poses, ran to him. After him, in a bead collar jingling like iron, Milka sprang gayly out. She always greeted the male dogs when she came out ; she played with some of them, smelt others, growled a little, and hunted fleas all round.

Papa mounted his horse, and we set out.

CHAPTER VII

THE HUNT

THE huntsman in chief, who was called Turka, rode in front on a dark-grey Roman-nosed horse ; he wore a shaggy cap, a huge horn over his shoulder, and a knife in his belt. From the man's fierce and gloomy exterior, one would sooner imagine that he was going to deadly conflict than on a hunting expedition. About the hind heels of his horse ran the hounds, clustered together in a many-hued, undulating pack. It was pitiful to contemplate the fate which befell any unfortunate dog who took it into his head to linger behind. His companion was forced to drag him along with great effort ; and when he had succeeded in this, one of the huntsmen who rode in the rear never failed to give him a cut with his whip, saying, "To the pack with you !" When we emerged from the gates, papa ordered us and the huntsmen to ride along the road, but he himself turned into a field of rye.

The grain harvest was in full swing. The shining yellow field, extending farther than the eye could reach, was closed in on one side only by a lofty blue forest, which seemed to me then a very distant and mysterious place, behind which the world came to an end, or some uninhabited region began. The whole field was covered with shocks of sheaves and with people. Here and there amid the tall rye, on some spot that had been reaped, the bended back of a reaper was visible, the swing of the ears as she laid them between her fingers, a woman in the shade, bending over a cradle,

and scattered sheaves upon the stubble strewn with cornflowers. In another quarter, peasants clad only in their shirts, standing on carts, were loading the sheaves, and raising a dust in the dry, hot fields. The starosta (overseer), in boots, and with his armyak* thrown on without the sleeves, and tally-sticks in his hand, perceiving papa in the distance, took off his lamb's-wool cap, wiped his reddish head and beard with a towel, and shouted at the women. The sorrel horse which papa rode had a light, playful gait ; now and then he dropped his head on his breast, pulled at the reins, and with his heavy tail brushed away the horse-flies and common flies which clung thirstily to him. Two greyhounds with their tails curved in the shape of a sickle lifted their legs high, and sprang gracefully over the tall stubble, behind the horse's heels ; Milka ran in front, and, with head bent low, was watching for the scent. The conversation of the people, the noise of the horses and carts, the merry whistle of the quail, the hum of insects which circled in motionless swarms in the air, the scent of the wormwood, the straw, and the sweat of the horses, the thousands of varying hues and shadows which the glowing sun poured over the bright-yellow stubble field, the blue of the distant forest, and the pale lilac of the clouds, the white spiders' webs which floated through the air or lay upon the stubble—all this I saw, heard, and felt.

When we reached Kalinovoe (viburnum) woods, we found the carriage already there, and beyond all our expectations, a cart, in the midst of which sat the butler. In the shade we beheld a samovar, a cask with a form of ice-cream, and some other attractive parcels and baskets. It was impossible to make any mistake : there was to be tea, ice-cream, and fruit in the open air. At the sight of the cart, we manifested an uproarious joy ; for

A long, wide coat worn by peasants.

it was considered a great treat to drink tea in the woods on the grass, and especially in a place where nobody had ever drunk tea before.

Turka came to this little meadow-encircled wood, halted, listened attentively to papa's minute directions how to get into line, and where to sally forth (he never minded these directions, however, and did what seemed good to him), uncoupled the dogs, arranged the straps in a leisurely manner, mounted his horse, and disappeared behind the young birches. The first thing the hounds did on being released was to express their joy by wagging their tails, shaking themselves, putting themselves in order; and then, after a little scamper, they smelt each other, wagged their tails again, and set off in various directions.

"Have you a handkerchief?" asked papa.

I pulled one from my pocket, and showed it to him.

"Well, take that grey dog by your handkerchief—"

"Zhiran?" I inquired with a knowing air.

"Yes; and run along the road. When you come to a little meadow, stop and look about you; don't come back to me without a hare."

I wound my handkerchief about Zhiran's shaggy neck, and started at a headlong pace for the spot indicated to me. Papa laughed and called after me:

"Faster, faster, or you'll be too late."

Zhiran kept halting, pricking up his ears, and listening to the sounds of the hunt. I had not the strength to drag him from the spot, and I began to shout, "Catch him! catch him!" Then Zhiran tore away with such force that I could hardly hold him, and I fell down more than once before I reached my post. Selecting a shady and level place at the root of a lofty oak, I lay down on the grass, placed Zhiran beside me, and waited. My imagination, as always happens in such cases,

far outran reality. I fancied that I was already coursing my third hare, when the first hound burst from the woods. Turka's voice rang loudly and with animation through the forest; the hound was whimpering, and its voice was more and more frequently audible. Another voice, a bass, joined in, then a third and a fourth. These voices ceased, and again they interrupted each other. The sounds grew gradually louder and more unbroken, and at length merged into one ringing, all-pervading roar. The meadow-encircled clump of trees was one mass of sound, and the hounds were burning with impatience.

When I heard that, I stiffened at my post. Fixing my eyes upon the edge of the woods, I smiled foolishly; the perspiration poured from me in streams, and although the drops tickled me as they ran down my chin, I did not wipe them off. It seemed to me that nothing could be more decisive than this moment. This attitude of expectancy was too unnatural to last long. The hounds poured into the edge of the woods, then they retreated from me; there was no hare, I began to look about. Zhiran was in the same state; at first he tugged and whimpered, then lay down beside me, put his nose upon my knees and became quiet.

Around the bare roots of the oak tree under which I sat, upon the grey, parched earth, amid the withered oak-leaves, acorns, dry moss-grown sticks, yellowish-green moss, and the thin green blades of grass which pushed their way through here and there, ants swarmed in countless numbers. They hurried after each other along the thorny paths which they had themselves prepared; some with burdens, some unladen. I picked up an acorn, and obstructed their way with it. You should have seen how some, despising the obstacle, climbed over it, while others, especially those who had loads, quite lost their heads and did not

know what to do; they halted and hunted for a path, or turned back, or crawled upon my hand from the acorn, with the intention, apparently, of getting under the sleeve of my jacket. I was diverted from these interesting observations by a butterfly with yellow wings, which hovered before me in an extremely attractive manner. No sooner had I directed my attention to it than it flew away a couple of paces, circled about a nearly faded head of wild white clover, and settled upon it. I do not know whether it was warming itself in the sun, or drawing the sap from this weed, but it was evident it was enjoying itself. Now and then it fluttered its wings and pressed closer to the flower, and at last became perfectly still. I propped my head on both hands and gazed at it with pleasure.

All at once, Zhiran began to howl, and tugged with such force that I nearly fell over. I glanced about. Along the skirt of the woods skipped a hare, with one ear drooping, the other raised. The blood rushed to my head, and, forgetting everything for the moment, I shouted something in a wild voice, loosed my dog, and set out to run. But no sooner had I done this than my repentance began. The hare squatted, gave a leap, and I saw no more of him.

But what was my mortification, when, following the hounds, who came baying down to the edge of the woods, Turka made his appearance from behind a bush! He perceived my mistake (which consisted in not *holding out*), and casting a scornful glance upon me, he merely said, "*Eh, barin!*" * But you should have heard how he said it. It would have been pleasanter for me if he had hung me to his saddle like a hare.

For a long time I stood in deep despair on the same spot. I did not call the dog, and only repeated as I beat my thighs, "Heavens, what have I done?"

Master.

I heard the hounds coursing in the distance ;
I heard them give tongue on the other side of the
wood-island, and kill a hare, and Turka summoning
the dogs with his long whip : but still I did not
stir from the spot.

CHAPTER VIII

GAMES

THE hunt was at an end. A cloth was spread under the shadow of the young birches, and the whole company seated themselves around it. Gavriilo, the butler, having trodden down the lush green grass about him, wiped the plates, and emptied the baskets of the plums and peaches wrapped in leaves. The sun shone through the green branches of the young birches, and cast round quivering gleams upon the patterns of the tablecloth, upon my feet, and even upon Gavriilo's polished perspiring head. A light breeze fluttering through the leaves, upon my hair and my streaming face, was very refreshing.

When we had divided the ices and fruits, there was nothing more to be done at the cloth ; and in spite of the sun's scorching, oblique rays, we rose and began to play.

"Now, what shall it be?" said Liubotchka, blinking in the sun, and dancing up and down upon the grass. "Let us have Robinson!"

"No, it's tiresome," said Volodya, rolling lazily on the turf, and chewing a leaf: "it's eternally Robinson! If you insist upon it, though, let's build an arbor."

Volodya was evidently putting on airs: it must have been because he was proud of having ridden the hunter, and he feigned to be very much fatigued. Possibly also he had too much sound sense, and too little force of imagination, to fully enjoy a game of Robinson. This game consisted in

acting a scene from the "Robinson Suisse," which we had read not long before.

"Now, please . . . why won't you do this to please us?" persisted the girls. "You shall be Charles or Ernest or the father, whichever you like," said Katenka, trying to pull him from the ground by the sleeves of his jacket.

"I really don't want to: it's tiresome," said Volodya, stretching himself and smiling in a self-satisfied way.

"It's better to stay at home if nobody wants to play," declared Liubotchka through her tears.

She was a horrible cry-baby.

"Come along, then; only please don't cry. I can't stand it."

Volodya's condescension afforded us but very little satisfaction: on the contrary, his bored and lazy look destroyed all the illusion of the play. When we sat down on the ground, and, imagining that we were setting out on a fishing expedition, began to row with all our might, Volodya sat with folded hands, and in an attitude which had nothing in common with the attitude of a fisherman. I remarked on this to him; but he retorted that we should gain nothing and do no good by either a greater or less flourish of hands, and should not travel any farther. I involuntarily agreed with him. When I made believe go hunting with a stick on my shoulder, and took my way to the woods, Volodya lay down flat on his back, with his hands under his head, and said it was all the same as though he went too. Such speeches and behaviour cooled us towards this game, and were extremely unpleasant; the more so, as it was impossible not to admit in one's own mind that Volodya was behaving sensibly.

I knew myself that not only could I not kill a bird with my stick, but that it was impossible to fire it off. That was what the game consisted in.

• The Swiss Family Robinson.

If you judge things in that fashion, then it is impossible to ride on chairs; but, thought I, Volodya himself must remember how, on long winter evenings, we covered an arm-chair with a cloth, and made a calash out of it, while one mounted as coachman, the other as footman; and the girls sat in the middle, with three chairs for a troika of horses, and we set out on a journey. And how many adventures happened on the way! and how merrily and swiftly the winter evenings passed! Judging by the present standard, there would be no games. And if there are no games, what is left?

CHAPTER IX

SOMETHING IN THE NATURE OF FIRST LOVE

PRETENDING that she was plucking some American fruits from a tree, Liubotchka tore off a leaf with a huge caterpillar on it, flung it on the ground in terror, raised her hands, and sprang back as though she feared that something would spout out of it. The game came to an end: we all flung ourselves down on the ground with our heads together, to gaze at this curiosity.

I looked over Katenka's shoulder: she was trying to pick the worm up on a leaf which she placed in its way.

I had observed that many girls have a trick of twisting their shoulders, endeavouring by this movement to bring back their low-necked dresses, which had slipped down, to their proper place. I remember that this motion always made Mimi angry: "It is the gesture of a chambermaid," she said. Katenka made this motion as she bent over the worm, and at the same moment the wind raised her kerchief from her white neck. Her little shoulder was within two fingers' length of my lips. I no longer looked at the worm: I stared and stared at Katenka's shoulder, and kissed it with all my might. She did not turn round, but I noticed that her cheeks crimsoned up to her very ears. Volodya did not raise his head, but said scornfully:

"What tenderness!"

The tears came into my eyes.

I never took my eyes from Katenka. I had long been used to her fresh little blonde face, and I had

always loved it. But now I began to observe it more attentively, and I liked it still better. When we went back to the grown-up people, papa announced, to our great joy, that, at mamma's request, our departure was postponed until the following day.

We rode back in company with the carriage. Volodya and I, desirous of outdoing each other in the art of horsemanship and in boldness, galloped around it. My shadow was longer than before, and, judging from it, I imagined that I must present the effect of a very fine rider; but the feeling of self-satisfaction which I experienced was speedily destroyed by the following circumstance. Desiring to completely fascinate all who rode in the carriage, I fell behind a little; then, with the assistance of my whip, I started my horse forward, and assumed an attitude of careless grace, with the intention of dashing past them like a whirlwind on the side where Katenka sat. The only point I was in doubt about was: would it be better to gallop by in silence, or to cry out? But the hateful horse came to a standstill so unexpectedly when he came up with the carriage-horses, that I flew over the saddle upon his neck, and almost tumbled off his back.

CHAPTER X

WHAT KIND OF A MAN WAS MY FATHER?

HE was a man of the last century, and possessed that indefinable chivalry of character which was common to the youth of that period. He looked with disdain upon the people of the present century; and this view proceeded quite as much from innate pride as from a secret feeling of vexation that he could not wield that influence or enjoy those successes in our age which he had enjoyed in his own. His two principal passions in life were cards and women: he had won several millions during his lifetime, and had had *liaisons* with an innumerable number of women of all classes.

A tall, stately figure, a strange, tripping gait, a habit of shrugging his shoulders, little eyes which were always smiling, a large aquiline nose, irregular lips, which closed awkwardly but agreeably, a defect in speech resulting in a lisp, and a large bald spot extending all over his head—such was my father's appearance from the time I first recollect him—an appearance by means of which he not only managed to make the reputation of a man *à bonnes fortunes*, but to be so, and to please everyone, without exception—people of all classes and conditions, and especially those whom he desired to please.

He understood how to get the upper hand in all his dealings. Without ever having been a member of the *very highest society*, he had always had intercourse with individuals belonging to that

circle, and of such a sort that he was always respected. He understood that extreme measure of pride and self-confidence which, without offending others, raised him in the estimation of the world. He was original, though not always, and employed his originality as an instrument which in some cases takes the place of worldly wisdom or wealth. Nothing in the world could arouse in him a sensation of wonder: however brilliant his position, he seemed born to it. He understood so well how to hide from others, and put away from himself, that dark side of life which is familiar to everyone, and filled with petty vexations and griefs, that it was impossible not to envy him.

He was a connoisseur of all things which afford comfort or pleasure, and understood how to make use of them. His hobby was his brilliant connections, which he possessed partly through my mother's relations and partly through the companions of his youth, with whom he was secretly enraged, because they had all risen to high official positions, while he had remained only a retired lieutenant in the Guards. Like all men who have once been in the army, he did not know how to dress fashionably: nevertheless, his dress was original and elegant. His clothes were always very loose and light, his linen of the most beautiful quality, his large cuffs and collars were turned back. And it all suited his tall figure, his muscular build, his bald head, and his calm, self-confident movements. He was sensitive, and even easily moved to tears. Often, when he came to a pathetic place while reading aloud, his voice would begin to tremble, the tears would come; and he would drop the book in vexation. He loved music, and sang, to his own piano accompaniment, the romances of his friend A., gypsy songs, and some airs from the operas; but he did not like scientific music, and said frankly, without heeding the general opinion, that Beethoven's sonatas drove him to sleep and *ennui*;

and that he knew nothing finer than "Wake the young girl not," as sung by Madame Semenova, and "Not alone," as gypsy Taniuscha sang it. His nature was one of those to whose good deeds a public is indispensable. And he only considered that good which was so reckoned by the public. God knows whether he had any moral convictions. His life was so full of passions of every sort, that he never had any time to make an inventory of them, and he was so happy in his life that he saw no necessity for so doing.

A fixed opinion on things generally, and unalterable principles, formulated themselves in his mind as he grew older—but solely on practical grounds. Those deeds and that manner of life which procured him happiness and pleasure, he considered good; and he thought that everyone should always do the same. He talked very persuasively; and this quality, it seems to me, heightened the flexibility of his principles: he was capable of depicting the same act as a charming bit of mischief, or as a piece of low-lived villainy.

CHAPTER XI

OCCUPATIONS IN THE LIBRARY AND THE DRAWING-ROOM

IT was already dark when we reached home. Mamma seated herself at the piano, and we children fetched our paper, pencils, and paints, and settled ourselves about the round table at our drawing. I had only blue paint ; nevertheless, I undertook to depict the hunt. After representing, in very lively style, a blue boy mounted on a blue horse, and some blue dogs, I was not quite sure whether I could paint a blue hare, and ran to papa in his study to take advice on the matter. Papa was reading ; and in answer to my question, "Are there any blue hares ?" he said, without raising his head, "Yes, my dear, there are." I went back to the round table, and painted a blue hare ; then I found it necessary to turn the blue hare into a bush. The bush did not please me either ; I turned it into a tree, and the tree into a stack of hay, and the haystack into a cloud ; and finally I blotted my whole paper so with blue paint, that I tore it up in vexation, and went to dozing in the big arm-chair.

Mamma was playing the Second Concerto of Field—her teacher. I dreamed, and light, bright, transparent recollections penetrated my imagination. She played Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique, and my memories became painful, dark, burdensome. Mamma often played those two pieces ; therefore I well remember the feeling which they aroused in me. It resembled memories : but

memories of what? I seemed to remember something which had never happened.

Opposite me was the door into the study, and I saw Jakov enter, and some other people with caftans and beards. The door immediately closed behind them. "Now business has begun!" I thought. It seemed to me that nothing in the world could be more important than the business which was being transacted in that study; this idea of mine was confirmed by the fact that all who entered the study door did so on tiptoe and exchanging whispers. Papa's loud voice was audible; and the smell of cigars, which always attracted me very much, I know not why, was perceptible. All at once, I was much surprised in my half slumber by the familiar squeak of boots in the butler's pantry. Karl Ivanitch walked up to the door on tiptoe, but with a gloomy and decided countenance, and some papers in his hand, and knocked lightly. He was admitted, and the door was slammed again.

"Some misfortune must have happened," I thought. "Karl Ivanitch is angry: he is ready for anything."

And again I fell into a doze.

But no misfortune had occurred. In about an hour, the same squeaking boots woke me up. Karl Ivanitch emerged from the door, wiping away the tears which I espied on his cheeks, with his handkerchief, and went upstairs, muttering something to himself. Papa came out after him, and entered the drawing-room.

"Do you know what I have just decided upon?" he said in a gay voice, laying his hand on mamma's shoulder.

"What is it, my dear?"

"I shall take Karl Ivanitch with the children. There is room for him in the britchka. They are used to him, and it seems that he is very much attached to them; and seven hundred roubles a

year does not count for much : and then he is a very good sort of fellow at bottom."

I never could understand why papa scolded Karl Ivanitch.

"I am very glad," said mamma, "both for the children's sake and for his : he is a fine fellow."

"If you could only have seen how much affected he was when I told him that he was to keep the five hundred roubles as a gift ! But the most amusing thing of all is this account which he brought me. It's worth looking at," he added with a smile, handing her a list in Karl Ivanitch's handwriting : "it was delightful."

This was what the list contained :—

"Two fish-hooks for the children, seventy kopeks.

"Colored paper, gold binding, a press and a stretcher for a little box for a present, six rubles fifty-five kopeks.

"Books and bows, presents to the children, eight roubles sixteen kopeks.

"Trousers for Nikolai, four roubles.

"The gold watch promised by Piotr Alexandrovitch, to be got from Moscow in 18—, one hundred and forty roubles.

"Total due to Karl Mauer above his salary, one hundred and fifty-nine roubles seventy-nine kopeks."

After reading this list, in which Karl Ivanitch demanded payment of all the sums he had expended for presents, and even the price of the gifts promised to himself, anyone would think that Karl Ivanitch was nothing more than an unfeeling, covetous egoist—and he would be very much mistaken.

When he entered the study with this account in his hand, and a speech ready prepared in his head, he intended to set forth eloquently before papa all that he had endured in our house ; but when he began to speak in that touching voice, and with the feeling intonations which he usually employed

when dictating to us, his eloquence acted most powerfully on himself ; so that when he reached the place where he said, " Painful as it is to me to part from the children," he became utterly confused, his voice trembled, and he was forced to pull his checked handkerchief from his pocket.

" Yes, Piotr Alexandritch," he said through his tears (this passage did not occur in the prepared speech) : " I have become so used to the children, that I do not know what I shall do without them. It will be better for me to serve you without salary," he added, wiping away his tears with one hand, and presenting the bill with the other.

That Karl Ivanitch was sincere when he spoke thus, I can affirm with authority, for I know his kind heart ; but how he reconciled that account with his words, remains a mystery to me.

" If it is painful for you, it would be still more painful for me to part with you," said papa, tapping him on the shoulder. " I have changed my mind."

Not long before supper Grischa entered the room. From the moment he had come to the house, he had not ceased to sigh and weep ; which, according to the opinion of those who believed in his power of prophecy, presaged some evil to our house. He began to take leave, and said that he should proceed farther the next morning. I winked at Volodya, and went out.

" What is it ? "

" If you want to see Grischa's chains, let's go upstairs to the men's rooms immediately. Grischa sleeps in the second chamber. We can sit in the garret perfectly well, and see everything."

" Splendid ! Wait here ; I'll call the girls."

The girls ran out, and we betook ourselves upstairs. It was settled, not without some disputing, however, who was to go first into the dark garret ; and we sat down and waited.

CHAPTER XII

GRISCHA

THE darkness oppressed all of us : we pressed close to each other, and did not speak. Grischa followed us almost immediately, with his quiet steps. In one hand he carried his staff, in the other a tallow candle in a brass candlestick. We held our breaths.

"Lord Jesus Christ ! Most Holy Mother of God ! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost !" he repeated several times, with various intonations and abbreviations which are peculiar to those only who repeat these words often, as he drew the air into his lungs.

Having placed his staff in the corner, and inspected his bed during his prayer, he began to undress. He unfastened his old black belt, removed his tattered nankeen smock, folded it carefully, and laid it over the back of a chair. His face did not now express haste and stupidity, as usual : on the contrary, it was composed, melancholy, and even majestic. His movements were deliberate and thoughtful.

Clad in his underclothes alone, he sank gently down upon the bed, made the sign of the cross over it on all sides, and with an evident effort (for he frowned) he adjusted the chains beneath his shirt. After sitting there a while and anxiously examining several rents in his linen, he rose, lifted the candlestick on a level with the shrine in the corner, which contained several images, repeating a prayer meantime, crossed himself before them, and turned the

candle upside down. It sputtered and went out.

The moon, which was almost full, shone in through the window looking towards the forest. The long white figure of the fool was illuminated on one side by the pale, silvery rays of the moon : on the other it was in deep shadow ; it fell on the floor and walls, and reached to the ceiling in company with the shadows from the window-frame. The watchman knocked on the copper plate in the courtyard.

Grischa folded his huge arms across his breast, bent his head, sighing heavily, and without intermission, and stood in silence before the images ; then he knelt, with some difficulty, and began to pray.

At first he softly recited the familiar prayers, merely accentuating certain words ; then he repeated them, but in a loud voice, and with much animation. He began to employ his own words, endeavouring, with evident effort, to express himself in Slavic style. His words were incoherent but touching. He prayed for all his benefactors (as he called those who entertained him), among them mamma, and us ; he prayed for himself, besought God to forgive him his grievous sins, and said : " O God, forgive my enemies ! " He rose with a groan, and, repeating the same words over and over, he fell to the ground again, and again rose, notwithstanding the weight of the chains, which emitted a harsh, sharp sound as they struck the floor.

Volodya gave me a painful pinch on my foot, but I did not even look round : I merely rubbed the spot with one hand, and continued to observe all Grischa's words and motions with a sentiment of childish wonder, pity, and reverence.

Instead of the merriment and laughter, upon which I had reckoned when I entered the garret, I felt a trembling and sinking of my heart.

Grischa remained in this state of religious

exaltation for a long time, and improvised prayers. He repeated "*Lord have mercy,*" several times in succession, but each time with fresh force and expression. Then he said: "*Forgive me, Lord; teach me what I should do; teach me what I should do, Lord!*" with an expression as though he expected an immediate response to his words; then several lamentable groans were audible. He rose to his knees, crossed his hands upon his breast, and became silent.

I put my head softly out of the door, and held my breath. Grischa did not stir; heavy sighs forced themselves from his breast; a tear stood in the dim pupil of his blind eye, which was illuminated by the moon.

"Thy will be done!" he cried suddenly, with an indescribable expression, fell with his forehead to the floor, and sobbed like a child.

A long time has passed since then; many memories of the past have lost all significance for me and have become like confused visions; even pilgrim Grischa has long ago taken his last journey: but the impression which he made upon me, and the feeling which he awakened, will never die out of my memory.

O great Christian Grischa! Thy faith was so strong, that thou didst feel the nearness of God; thy love was so great, that thy words poured from thy lips of themselves—thou didst not revise them with thy judgment. And what lofty praise didst thou offer to His majesty, when, finding no words, thou didst fling thyself to the earth in tears!

The emotion with which I listened to Grischa could not last long; in the first place, because my curiosity was satisfied, and, in the second, because my legs were stiff with sitting in one position, and I wanted to join in the general whispering and movement which was audible behind me in the dark garret. Someone caught my hand, and said, "Whose hand is this?" It was perfectly dark,

but I immediately recognized Katenka by the touch of the hand, and by the voice which was just above my ear.

It was quite without premeditation that I grasped her arm, on which the sleeve reached only to the elbow, and raised it to my lips. Katenka was evidently surprised at this, and pulled her hand away : this movement caused her to strike a broken chair which stood in the garret. Grischa raised his head, glanced quietly about, repeating a prayer, and began to make the sign of the cross on all the corners. We ran out of the garret whispering, and making a great commotion.

CHAPTER XIII

NATALYA SAVISCHNA

ABOUT the middle of the last century, a plump, red-cheeked, barefooted, but merry girl, Nataschka, used to run about the court-yard in the village of Khabarovka in a tattered dress. My grandfather had promoted her to be one of grandmother's female servants, on account of the services of her father Savva, and at his request. Nataschka, as a maid, was distinguished for her gentleness of nature, and her zeal. When mamma was born, and a nurse was required, this service was intrusted to Nataschka; and in this new career she won both praise and reward for her activity, faithfulness, and attachment to her young mistress.

But the powdered head, stockings, and buckles of the stout young butler Foka, who, in virtue of his office, was often brought in contact with Natalya, captivated her rough but loving heart. She even made up her mind to go herself to grandfather, and ask permission to marry Foka. Grandfather looked upon her request as ingratitude, turned her away, and sent poor Natalya to the cattle-farm, in a village of the steppe, to punish her. But within six months Natalya was restored to her former duty, since no one could fill her place. On returning from banishment, she entered grandfather's presence, threw herself at his feet, and besought him to restore her to favor and affection, and to forget the folly which had come upon her, and to which she swore not to return. And she kept her word.

From that day Nataschka became Natalya

Savischna, and wore a cap. All the treasures of love which she possessed she transferred to her young mistress.

When, later on, a governess replaced her with mamma, she received the keys of the storehouse, and all the linen and provisions were given into her charge. She fulfilled these new duties with the same love and zeal. She had always lived on the estate; she saw waste, ruin, robbery, on every side, and endeavoured by every means in her power to counteract them.

When mamma married, desiring in some way to show her gratitude to Natalya Savischna for her labor and attachment of twenty years, she had her summoned; and, expressing in the most flattering terms all her love and obligations, she handed her a sheet of stamped paper, which declared that Natalya Savischna was a free woman; and she said that whether the latter should continue to serve in our house or not, she would always receive a yearly pension of three hundred roubles. Natalya Savischna listened to all this in silence; then taking the document in her own hands, she looked angrily at it, muttered something between her lips, and flew out of the room, slamming the door behind her. Not understanding the cause of this strange behaviour, mamma, after waiting a little, went to Natalya's room. She was sitting on her chest, with tear-swollen eyes, twisting her handkerchief in her fingers, and intently regarding the tattered fragments of her emancipation paper, which were scattered over the floor before her.

"What is the matter, dearest Natalya Savischna?" asked mamma, taking her hand.

"Nothing, matuschka,"* she replied. "I must be repulsive to you in some way, that you drive me from the house. Well, I will go."

She pulled away her hand, and with difficulty, restraining her tears, she made a motion to leave the

Little mother; a term of endearment.

room. Mamma detained her, embraced her, and they both wept in company.

From the time when I can recollect anything, I remember Natalya Savischna, her love and caresses; but then it never entered my mind to think what a rare and wonderful being that old woman was. Not only did she never speak, but she seemed never to think, of herself: her whole life was love and self-sacrifice. I was so accustomed to her tender, unselfish love for us, that I did not even imagine that it could be otherwise; was not in the least grateful to her, and never asked myself, Is she happy? Is she content?

Sometimes, under the plea of imperative necessity, I would run away from my lessons to her room, and begin to dream aloud, not in the least embarrassed by her presence. She was always busy over something; she was either knitting a stocking, or turning over the chests with which her room was filled, or taking account of the linen, and listening to all the nonsense which I uttered; how, "when I got to be a general, I would marry a wonderful beauty, buy myself a sorrel horse, build a glass house, and send for all Karl Ivanitch's relatives from Saxony," and so on; she would say, "Yes, *batiuschka*,* yes." Generally, when I rose and prepared to take my departure, she opened a blue chest—on the inside of whose cover, as I now remember, there were pasted a picture of a hussar from a pomade-box, and a drawing by Volodya—and took from it a stick of incense, lighted it, and said as she waved it about—

"This, my dear, is incense. When your late grandfather—may the kingdom of heaven be his!—went against the Turks, he brought this back. This is the last bit," she added with a sigh.

Positively, there was everything in the chests with which her room was filled. Whatever was

Little father, my dear.

needed, the cry always was, "We must ask Natalya Savischna;" and, in fact, she always found the article required, after a little rummaging, and said, "It's well that I hid it away." In those chests were thousands of things which nobody in the house, except herself, ever knew or troubled themselves about.

Once I was angry with her. This is how it was. I dropped the decanter when I was pouring myself some kvas at dinner, and spilled it on the tablecloth.

"Call Natalya Savischna, that she may take pride in her favourite," said mamma.

Natalya Savischna came, and on seeing the puddle which I had made, she shook her head; then mamma whispered something in her ear, and she went out, shaking her finger at me.

After dinner, I was on my way to the hall, and skipping about in the most cheerful frame of mind, when, all at once, Natalya Savischna sprang out from behind the door, with the tablecloth in her hand, caught me, and, in spite of desperate resistance on my part, began to rub my face with the wet place, crying, "Don't spot the tablecloth, don't spot the tablecloth!" I was so offended that I roared with rage.

"What!" I said to myself, as I walked up and down the room, and gulped down my tears, "Natalya Savischna, plain *Natalya*, calls me *thou* and strikes me in the face with a wet tablecloth to boot, as if I were a servant boy! This is horrible!"

When Natalya Savischna saw that I was gasping with rage, she immediately ran off, and I went on pacing to and fro, and meditating how I might pay off that impudent Natalya for the insult which she had inflicted on me.

In a few minutes Natalya Savischna returned, approached me timidly, and began to exhort me.

"Enough, my dear, don't cry. Forgive me,

I was foolish. I am in the wrong. You will forgive me, my dove. Here, this is for you."

From beneath her kerchief she drew a horn of red paper, in which were two caramels and one grape, and gave it to me with a trembling hand. I had not the strength to look the good old woman in the face ; I turned away, took her gift, and my tears flowed still more abundantly, but from love and shame now, and no longer from anger.

CHAPTER XIV

PARTING

AT twelve o'clock on the day following the events which I have described, the calash and britchka stood at the door. Nikolai was dressed for travelling; that is to say, his trousers were tucked into his boots, and his old coat was very closely belted. He stood by the britchka, packing the overcoats and cushions under the seat; when the pile seemed to him too high, he seated himself on the cushions, jumped up and down, and flattened them.

"For Heaven's sake, Nikolai Dmitritch, can't we put the master's strong box in?" said papa's panting valet, leaning out of the calash: "it is small."

"You should have said so before, Mikhei Ivanitch," answered Nikolai quickly and angrily, flinging a parcel with all his might on the floor of the britchka. "O Lord, my head is going round, and here you come with your box!" he added, pulling off his cap, and wiping the big drops of perspiration from his burning brow.

Men-servants in coats, caftans, shirts, without hats, women in striped petticoats and striped dresses, with children in their arms, and barefooted children stood about the steps, stared at the equipages, and talked among themselves. One of the postilions—a bent old man in a winter-cap and armyak—held the pole of the calash, swung it backwards and forwards, and thoughtfully surveyed its action; the other, a good-looking

young fellow, clad only in a white smock with shoulder-gussets of red kumatch,* and a black lamb's-wool cap, which he tilted first over one ear and then over the other, as he scratched his blonde curls, placed his armyak on the box, flung the reins there also, and, cracking his braided knout, gazed now at his boots, now at the coachmen who were greasing the britchka. One of them, after having finished his labours, was straining himself and holding the steps; another was bending over the wheel, and carefully greasing axle and box, and even smearing it from below in a circle, in order that the oil upon his cloth might not be wasted. The broken-down post-horses of various colours stood at the fence, and brushed away the flies with their tails. Some of them planted their shaggy, swollen legs far apart, closed their eyes, and dozed; some scratched each other from *ennui*, or nipped the fronds and stalks of the harsh, dark-green ferns which grew beside the porch. Several greyhounds breathed heavily as they lay in the sun; others got into the shade beneath the calash and britchka, and licked the tallow around the axles. The whole atmosphere was filled with a kind of dusty mist; the horizon was of a grayish lilac hue, but there was not so much as a tiny cloud in the sky. The strong west wind raised pillars of dust from the roads and fields, bent the crests of the lofty lindens, and the birches in the garden, and bore far away the falling yellow leaves. I sat by the window, and awaited the completion of the preparations with impatience.

When all were assembled around the large table in the drawing-room, in order to spend a few minutes together for the last time, it never entered my mind what a painful moment was awaiting us. The most trivial thoughts wandered through my brain. I asked myself, Which post-boy will drive the calash, and which the britchka?

* A red cotton material.

who would travel with papa, and who with Karl Ivanitch? and why was it indispensable to wrap me up in a scarf and a long wadded overcoat?

"Am I so delicate? I shall not freeze. I wish they would get through this as quickly as possible! I want to get in and ride off."

"To whom shall I give the list of the children's linen?" asked Natalya Savischna, coming in with tear-swollen eyes and the list in her hand, as she turned to mamma.

"Give it to Nikolai, and come back to say good-bye to the children."

The old woman tried to say something, but suddenly paused, covered her face with her handkerchief, and left the room with a wave of the hand.

My heart contracted with pain when I saw that motion; but impatience to start was stronger than that feeling, and I continued to listen indifferently to papa's conversation with mamma. They talked of things which evidently interested neither of them: What was it necessary to purchase for the house? what was to be said to Princess Sophie and Madame Julie? and would the travelling be good?

Foka entered, and, halting on the threshold, said, "The horses are ready," in exactly the same tone with which he announced, "Dinner is served." I noticed that mamma shuddered and turned pale at this announcement, as though she had not expected it.

Foka was ordered to close all the doors of the room. I was very much amused "at their all hiding themselves from somebody."

When all sat down, Foka also seated himself on the edge of a chair; but no sooner had he done so than a door squeaked, and all glanced round. Natalya Savischna entered in haste, and, without raising her eyes, took refuge on the same chair with Foka. I seem now to see Foka's bald head and wrinkled, immovable face, and the kind, bent

form in the cap beneath which the gray hair was visible. They crowded together on the one chair, and both felt awkward.

I remained unconcerned and impatient. The ten seconds during which we sat there with closed doors seemed a whole hour to me. At length we all rose, crossed ourselves, and began to take leave. Papa embraced mamma, and kissed her several times.

"Enough, my dear," said papa. "We are not parting for ever."

"It is painful, nevertheless," said mamma in a voice which quivered with tears.

When I heard that voice, and beheld her trembling lips and her eyes filled with tears, I forgot everything, and everything seemed to me so sad and miserable and terrible that I would rather have run away than have said good-bye to her. At that moment I realised that when she embraced papa, she had already taken leave of us.

She kissed and crossed Volodya so many times, that, supposing that she would now turn to me, I stepped forward. But she continued to bless him and to press him to her bosom. Finally I embraced her, and clinging to her I wept without a thought beyond my grief.

When we went out to get the carriage, the tiresome servants stepped forward in the anteroom to say farewell. Their "Your hand, please, sir," their noisy kisses on our shoulders, and the smell of the tallow on their heads, aroused in me a sentiment nearly akin to that of bitterness in irritable people. Under the influence of this feeling I kissed Natalya Savischna very coldly on her cap when, bathed in tears, she bade me farewell.

It is strange that I can even now see the faces of all those servants, and I could draw them with all the most minute details, but mamma's face and attitude have utterly escaped my mind; perhaps because during all that time I could not

once summon up courage to look at her. It seemed to me that if I did so, her sorrow and mine must increase to the bounds of impossibility.

I flung myself first of all into the calash, and placed myself on the back seat. As the back was up, I could see nothing, but some instinct told me that mamma was still there.

"Shall I look at her again, or not? Well, for the last time, then!" I said to myself, and leaned out of the calash towards the porch. At that moment mamma had come to the other side of the carriage with the same intent, and called me by name. When I heard her voice behind me, I turned round, but I did it so abruptly that we bumped our heads together. She smiled mournfully, and kissed me long and warmly for the last time.

When we had driven several rods, I made up my mind to look at her. The breeze raised the blue kerchief which was tied about her head; with bended head, and face covered with her hands, she was entering the porch slowly. Foka was sustaining her.

Papa sat beside me, and said nothing. I was choking with tears, and something oppressed my throat so that I was afraid I should stifle. As we entered the highway, we saw a white handkerchief which someone was waving from the balcony. I began to wave mine, and this movement calmed me somewhat. I continued to cry, and the thought that my tears proved my sensitiveness afforded me pleasure and consolation.

After we had travelled a verst, I sat more composedly, and began to observe the nearest objects which presented themselves to my eyes—the hind quarters of the side horse which was on my side. I noticed how this piebald animal flourished his tail, how he set one foot down after the other, how the post-boy's braided knout reached him, and his feet began to leap together. I noticed

how the harness leaped about on him, and the rings on the harness ; and I gazed until the harness was covered around the tail with foam. I began to look about me, upon the undulating fields of ripe rye, on the dark waste land, on which here and there ploughs, peasants, and mares with their foals were visible ; on the verst-stones ; I even glanced at the carriage-box to find out which post-boy was driving us ; and the tears were not dry on my face, when my thoughts were already far from the mother whom I had left perhaps for ever. But every recollection led me to the thought of her. I recalled the mushroom which I had found the day before in the birch-alley, and remembered that Liubotchka and Katenka had disputed as to who should pluck it, and I remember how they had wept at parting from us.

I was sorry for them, and for Natalya Savischna, and the birch-alley, and Foka. I was even sorry for malicious Mimi. I was sorry for everything, everything ! But poor mamma ? And the tears again filled my eyes, but not for long.

CHAPTER XV

CHILDHOOD

HAPPY, happy days of youth which can never be recalled! How is it possible not to love it, to cherish memories of it? Those memories refresh and elevate my soul, and serve me as the fountain of my best enjoyment.

—You have run your fill. You sit at the tea-table, in your high chair; you have drunk your cup of milk and sugar long ago; sleep is gluing your eyes together, but you do not stir from the spot, you sit and listen. And how can you help listening? Mamma is talking with someone, and the sound of her voice is so sweet, so courteous. That sound alone says so much to my heart! With eyes dimmed with slumber, I gaze upon her face, and all at once she has become small, so small—her face is no larger than a button, but I see it just as plainly still. I see her look at me and smile. I like to see her so small. I draw my eyelids still closer together, and she is no larger than the little boys one sees in the pupils of the eyes; but I moved, and the illusion was destroyed. I close my eyes, twist about, and try in every way to reproduce it, but in vain.

I rise, tuck my feet under me, and settle myself comfortably in an easy chair.

"You will go to sleep again, Nikolinka," says mamma; "you had better go upstairs."

"I don't want to go to bed, mamma," you reply, and sweet, dim fancies fill your brain; the healthy sleep of childhood closes your lids, and in a moment you lose consciousness, and sleep until they wake you. You feel in your dreams that

somebody's soft hand is touching you; you recognise it by that touch alone; and still sleeping you involuntarily seize it, and press it warmly, so warmly, to your lips.

Everyone has already departed: one candle only burns in the drawing-room. Mamma has said that she would wake me: it is she who has sat down on the chair in which I am sleeping, and strokes my hair with her wonderfully soft hand, and in my ears resounds the dear, familiar voice.

"Get up, my darling, it is time to go to bed."

She is not embarrassed by anyone's indifferent glances; she does not fear to pour out upon me all her tenderness and love. I do not move, but kiss her hand yet more earnestly.

"Get up, my angel."

She takes me by the neck with her other hand, and her slender fingers rouse me and tickle me: she touches me, and I am conscious of her perfume and her voice. All this makes me spring up, encircle her neck with my arms, press my head to her bosom with a sigh, and say—

"Oh, dear, dear mamma, how I love you!"

She smiles, with her sad, bewitching smile, takes my head in both her hands, kisses my brow, and sets me on her knees.

"So you love me very much?" She is silent for a moment, then speaks: "See that you always love me, and never forget me. If you lose your mamma, you will not forget her? you will not forget her, Nikolinka?"

She kisses me still more tenderly.

"Stop! don't say that, my darling, my precious one!" I cry, kissing her knees; and the tears stream in floods from my eyes—tears of love and rapture.

After that, perhaps, when you go upstairs, and stand before the images in your wadded dressing-gown, what a wonderful sensation you experience when you say, "O Lord! save papa and mamma!"

In repeating the prayers which my mouth lisped for the first time after my beloved mother, the love of her and the love of God are united, in some strange fashion, in one feeling.

After your prayer you wrap yourself in the bed-clothes, with a spirit light, bright, and inspiring; one dream succeeds another, but what are they all about? They are indescribable; but full of pure love, of hope and earthly happiness. You perhaps recall Karl Ivanitch and his bitter lot—the only unhappy man I knew—and you are so sorry for him, you love him so, that tears trickle from your eyes, and you think, “May God give him happiness; may He grant me power to help him, to lighten his sorrow; I am ready to sacrifice everything for him.” Then you thrust your favorite porcelain plaything—a dog and a hare—into the corner of the down pillow, and it pleases you to think how warm and comfortable they will be there. You pray again, that God will grant happiness to all, that everyone may be content, and that the weather to-morrow may be good for walking. You turn on the other side; your thoughts and dreams mingle confusedly, and intertwine, and you fall asleep quietly, calmly, with your face still wet with tears.

Will that freshness, that happy carelessness, that necessity for love and strength of faith, which you possessed in childhood, ever return? Can any time be better than that when the two greatest of virtues—innocent gaiety, and unbounded thirst for love—were the only requirements in life?

Where are those burning prayers? Where is that best gift of all, those pure tears of emotion? The angel of comfort flew thither with a smile, and wiped away those years, and instilled sweet visions into the uncorrupted imagination of infancy.

Has life left such heavy traces in my heart that those fears and raptures have deserted me for ever? Do the memories alone abide?

CHAPTER XVI

VERSES

NEARLY a month after we removed to Moscow, I was sitting upstairs in grandmamma's house, at a big table, writing. Opposite me sat the drawing-master, making the final corrections in a pencil-sketch of the head of some Turk or other in a turban. Volodya was standing behind the master, with outstretched neck, gazing over his shoulder. This little head was Volodya's first production in pencil; and it was to be presented to grandmamma that day, which was her saint's day.

"And you would not put any more shading here?" said Volodya, rising on tiptoe, and pointing at the Turk's neck.

"No, it is not necessary," said the teacher, laying aside the pencil and drawing-pen in a little box with a lock; "it is very good now, and you must not touch it again. Now for you, Nikolinka," he added, rising, and continuing to gaze at the Turk from the corner of his eye: "reveal your secret to us. What are you going to carry to your grandmother? To tell the truth, another head just like this would be the best thing. Good-bye, gentlemen," said he, and, taking his hat and case of drawing materials, he went out.

I had been thinking myself, at the moment, that a head would be better than what I was working at. When it had been announced to us that grandmamma's name-day was near at hand, and that we must prepare gifts for the occasion, I had immediately made up a couple of verses, hoping soon

to find the rest. I really do not know how such a strange idea for a child entered my mind ; but I remember that it pleased me greatly, and that to all questions on the subject I replied that I would give grandmamma a present without fail, but that I would not tell anyone of what it was to consist.

Contrary to my expectations, and in spite of all my efforts, I could not compose any more than the two stanzas which I had thought out on the spur of the moment. I began to read the poems in our books ; but neither Dmitrief nor Derzhavin afforded me any assistance. Quite the reverse : they but convinced me more thoroughly of my own incapacity. Knowing that Karl Ivanitch was fond of copying poetry, I went to rummaging among his papers on the sly ; and among the German poems I found one Russian, which must have been the product of his own pen :

TO MADAME L.

Remember me near ;
Remember me afar ;
Remember me
Now and for ever ;
Remember even to my grave
How faithfully I can love.*

KARL MAUER.

PETROVSKOE, 1828. June 3.

This poem, transcribed in a handsome round hand, on a thin sheet of note-paper, pleased me because of the touching sentiment with which it was penetrated. I immediately learned it by heart, and resolved to take it for a pattern. The matter progressed much more easily then. On the name-day a congratulation in twelve verses was ready, and as I sat in the schoolroom, I was copying it on vellum paper.

* It hardly comes under the head of poetry, even in the original.—TRANSLATOR.

Two sheets of paper were already ruined ; not because I had undertaken to make any alterations in them—the verses seemed to me very fine—but from the third line on, the ends began to incline upwards more and more, so that it was evident, even at a distance, that it was written crookedly, and was fit for nothing.

The third sheet was askew like the others ; but I was determined not to do any more copying. In my poem I congratulated grandmamma, wished her many years of health, and concluded thus :

“ To comfort thee we shall endeavour,
And love thee like our own dear mother.”

It seemed to be very good, yet the last line offended my ear strangely.

I kept repeating it to myself, and trying to find a rhyme instead of “ mother.”* “ Well, let it go. It's better than Karl Ivanitch's, anyway.”

So I transcribed the last stanza. Then I read my whole composition over aloud in the bedroom, with feeling and gesticulations. The verses were entirely lacking in rhythm, but I did not pause over them ; the last, however, struck me still more powerfully and unpleasantly. I sat down on the bed, and began to think.

“ Why did I write *like our own dear mother* ? She's not here, and it was not necessary to mention her. I love grandma, it's true ; I reverence her, but still she is not the same. Why did I write that ? Why have I lied ? Suppose this is poetry : it was necessary, all the same.”

At this moment the tailor entered with a new jacket.

“ Well, let it go,” I said, very impatiently, thrust my verses under my pillow in great vexation, and ran to try on my Moscow clothes.

* *Mat* (mother), as a rhyme to *utyeshai* (to comfort), is the difficulty. Nikolai tries to fit in *igrat* (to play) and *krovat* (bed), in elderly rhymester fashion.

The Moscow coat proved to be excellent. The cinnamon-brown half-coat, with its bronze buttons, was made to fit snugly ; not as they made them in the country. The black trousers were also tight ; it was wonderful to see how well they showed the muscles, and set upon the shoes.

"At last I've got some trousers with real straps," I thought, quite beside myself with joy, as I surveyed my legs on all sides. Although the new garments were very tight, and it was hard to move in them, I concealed the fact from everybody, and declared, that, on the contrary, I was extremely comfortable, and that if there was any fault about the clothes, it was that they were, if anything, a little too large. After that I stood for a long time before the glass, brushing my copiously pomaded hair ; but, try as I would, I could not make the tuft where the hair parts on the crown lie flat ; as soon as I ceased to press it down with the brush, in order to see if it would obey me, it rose, and projected in all directions, imparting to my face the most ridiculous expression.

Karl Ivanitch was dressing in another room ; and his blue swallow-tailed coat, and some white belongings, were carried through the schoolroom to him. The voice of one of grandmamma's maids became audible at the door which led downstairs. I went out to see what she wanted. In her hand she held a stiffly starched shirt-front, which she told me she had brought Karl Ivanitch, and that she had not slept all the previous night, in order that she might get it washed in time. I undertook to deliver it, and asked if grandmamma had risen.

"Yes, indeed, sir ! She has already drunk her coffee, and the protopope* has arrived. How fine you are !" she added, glancing at my new suit with a smile.

This remark made me blush. I whirled round

* Upper priest.

on one foot, cracked my fingers, and gave a leap ; wishing by this means to make her feel that she did not thoroughly appreciate, as yet, how very grand I was.

When I carried the shirt-front to Karl Ivanitch, he no longer needed it ; he had put on another, and, bending over before the little glass which stood on the table, he was holding the splendid ribbon of his cravat with both hands, and trying whether his clean-shaven chin would go into it easily and out again. After smoothing our clothes down on all sides, and requesting Nikolai to do the same for him, he led us to grandmamma. I laugh when I remember how strongly we three smelt of pomade as we descended the stairs.

Karl Ivanitch had in his hands a little box of his own manufacture, Volodya had his drawing, I had my verses ; each one had upon his tongue the greeting with which he intended to present his gift. At the very moment when Karl Ivanitch opened the drawing-room door, the priest was putting on his robes, and the first sounds of the service resounded.

Grandmamma was already in the drawing-room : she was standing by the wall, supporting herself on the back of a chair, over which she bent, and was praying devoutly ; beside her stood papa. He turned towards us, and smiled, as he saw us hide our gifts in haste behind our backs, and halt just inside the door, in our endeavour to escape being seen. The whole effect of unexpectedness upon which we had counted was ruined.

When the time came to go up and kiss the cross, I suddenly felt that I was under the oppressive influence of an ill-defined, benumbing timidity, and, realizing that I should never have courage to present my gift, I hid behind Karl Ivanitch, who, having congratulated grandmamma in his choicest language, shifted his box from his right hand to his left, handed it to the lady whose name-

day it was, and retreated a few paces in order to make way for Volodya. Grandmamma appeared to be in ecstasies over the box, which had gilt strips pasted on the edges, and expressed her gratitude with the most flattering of smiles. It was evident, however, that she did not know where to put the box, and it must have been for this reason that she proposed that papa should examine with what wonderful taste it was made.

After satisfying his curiosity, papa handed it to the protopope, who seemed exceedingly pleased with this trifle. He dandled his head, and gazed curiously, now at the box, and again at the artist who could make such a beautiful object. Volodya produced his Turk, and he also received the most flattering encomiums from all quarters. Now it was my turn: grandmamma turned to me with an encouraging smile.

Those who have suffered from shyness know that that feeling increases in direct proportion to the time which elapses, and that resolution decreases in an inverse ratio; that is to say, the longer the sensation lasts, the more unconquerable it becomes, and the less decision there is left.

The last remnants of courage and determination forsook me when Karl Ivanitch and Volodya presented their gifts, and my shyness reached a crisis; I felt that the blood was incessantly rushing from my heart into my head, as though one colour succeeded another on my face, and that great drops of perspiration broke out upon my nose and forehead. My ears burned; I felt a shiver and a cold perspiration all over my body; I shifted from foot to foot, and did not stir from the spot.

"Come, Nikolinka, show us what you have—a box or a drawing," said papa. There was nothing to be done. With a trembling hand, I presented the crumpled, fateful parcel; but my voice utterly refused to serve me, and I stood before grandmamma in silence. I could not get over the

thought that, in place of the drawing which was expected, my worthless verses would be read before everyone, including the words, *like our own dear mother*, which would clearly prove that I had never loved her and had forgotten her. How convey an idea of my sufferings during the time when grandmamma began to read my poem aloud, and when, unable to decipher it, she paused in the middle of a line in order to glance at papa with what then seemed to me a mocking smile; when she did not pronounce to suit me; and when, owing to her feebleness of vision, she gave the paper to papa before she had finished, and begged him to read it all over again from the beginning? It seemed to me that she did it because she did not like to read such stupid and crookedly written verses, and in order that papa might read for himself that last line which proved so clearly my lack of feeling. I expected that he would give me a fillip on the nose with those verses, and say, "You good-for-nothing boy, don't forget your mother—take that!" But nothing of the sort happened: on the contrary, when all was read, grandmamma said, "Charming!" and kissed my brow.

The little box, the drawing, and the verses were laid out in a row, beside two cambric handkerchiefs and a snuff-box with a portrait of mamma, on the movable table attached to the arm-chair in which grandmamma always sat.

"Princess Varvara Ilinitchna," announced one of the two huge lackeys who accompanied grandmamma's carriage.

Grandmamma gazed thoughtfully at the portrait set in the tortoise-shell cover of the snuff-box, and made no reply.

"Will your excellency receive her?" repeated the footman.

CHAPTER XVII

PRINCESS KORNAKOVA

“ASK her in,” said grandmamma, sitting back in her arm-chair.

The Princess was a woman of about forty-five, small, fragile, dry and bitter, with disagreeable greyish-green eyes, whose expression plainly contradicted that of the preternaturally sweet pursed-up mouth. Beneath her velvet bonnet, adorned with an ostrich plume, her bright red hair was visible; her eyebrows and lashes appeared still lighter and redder against the unhealthy colour of her face. In spite of this, thanks to her unconstrained movements, her tiny hands, and a peculiar coldness of feature, her general appearance was rather noble and energetic.

The Princess talked a great deal, and by her distinct enunciation belonged to the class of people who always speak as though someone were contradicting them, though no one has uttered a word: she alternately raised her voice and lowered it gradually, and began all at once to speak with fresh animation, and gazed at the persons who were present, but who took no part in the conversation, as though endeavouring to obtain support by this glance.

In spite of the fact that the Princess kissed grandmamma's hand, and called her *ma bonne tante* incessantly, I observed that grandmamma was not pleased with her: she twitched her brows in a peculiar manner while listening to her story, about the reason why Prince Mikhailo could not

come in person to congratulate grandmamma, in spite of his ardent desire to do so ; and, replying in Russian to the Princess's French, she said, with a singular drawl, " I am very much obliged to you, my dear, for your attention ; and as for Prince Mikhaïlo not coming, it is not worth mentioning, he always has so much to do ; and what pleasure could he find in sitting with an old woman ? "

And without giving the Princess time to contradict her, she went on :

" How are your children, my dear ? "

" Thank God, aunt, they are growing well, and studying and playing pranks, especially Etienne. He is the eldest, and he is getting to be so wild that we can't do anything with him ; but he's clever—a promising boy. Just imagine, cousin," she continued, turning exclusively to papa, because grandmamma, who took no interest in the Princess's children, and wanted to brag of her own grandchildren, had taken my verses from the box with great care, and was beginning to unfold them—" just imagine, cousin, what he did the other day." And the Princess bent over papa, and began to relate something with great animation. When she had finished her tale, which I did not hear, she immediately began to laugh, and, looking inquiringly at papa, said :

" That's a nice kind of boy, cousin ? He deserved a whipping ; but his caper was so clever and amusing, that I forgave him, cousin."

And, fixing her eyes on grandmamma, the Princess went on smiling, but said nothing.

" Do you *beat* your children, my dear ? " inquired grandmamma, raising her brows significantly, and laying a special emphasis on the word *beat*.

" Ah, my good aunt," replied the Princess in a good-natured tone, as she cast a swift glance at papa, " I know your opinion on that point ;

but you must permit me to disagree with you in one particular: in spite of all my thought and reading, in spite of all the advice which I have taken on this subject, experience has led me to the conviction that it is indispensable that one should act upon children through their fears. Fear is requisite, in order to make anything out of a child; is it not so, my cousin? Now, I ask you, do children fear anything more than the rod?"

With this she glanced inquiringly at us, and I confess I felt rather uncomfortable at that moment.

"Whatever you may say, a boy of twelve, or even one of fourteen, is still a child; but a girl is quite another matter."

"How lucky," I thought to myself, "that I am not her son!"

"Yes, that's all very fine, my dear," said grandmamma, folding up my verses, and placing them under the box, as though, after that, she considered the Princess unworthy of hearing such a production: "that's all very fine, but tell me, please, how you can expect any delicacy of feeling in your children after that."

And regarding this argument as unanswerable, grandmamma added, in order to put an end to the conversation:

"However, everyone has a right to his own opinion on that subject."

The Princess made no reply, but smiled condescendingly, thereby giving us to understand that she pardoned these strange prejudices in an individual who was so much respected.

"Ah, pray make me acquainted with your young people," she said, glancing at us, and smiling politely.

We rose, fixed our eyes on the Princess's face, but did not in the least know what we ought to do in order to show that the acquaintance had been made.

"Kiss the Princess's hand," said papa.

"I beg that you will love your old aunt," she said, kissing Volodya on the hair: "although I am only a distant aunt, I reckon on our friendly relations rather than on degrees of blood relationship," she added, directing her remarks chiefly to grandmamma; but grandmamma was still displeased with her, and answered:

"Eh! my dear, does such relationship count for anything nowadays?"

"This is going to be my young man of the world," said papa, pointing to Volodya; "and this is the poet," he added, just as I was kissing the Princess's dry little hand, and imagining, with exceeding vividness, that the hand held a rod, and beneath the rod was a bench, and so on, and so on.

"Which?" asked the Princess, detaining me by the hand.

"This little fellow with the tuft on his crown," answered papa, smiling gaily.

"What does my tuft matter to him? Is there no other subject of conversation?" I thought, and retreated into a corner.

I had the strangest possible conceptions of beauty. I even considered Karl Ivanitch the greatest beauty in the world; but I knew very well that I was not good-looking myself, and on this point I made no mistake: therefore any allusion to my personal appearance offended me deeply.

I remember very well, how once—I was six years old at the time—they were discussing my looks at dinner, and mamma was trying to discover something handsome about my face: she said I had intelligent eyes, an agreeable smile, and at last, yielding to papa's arguments and to ocular evidence, she was forced to confess that I was homely; and then, when I thanked her for the dinner, she tapped my cheek and said:

"You know, Nikolinka, that no one will love you for your face; therefore you must endeavour to be a good and sensible boy."

These words not only convinced me that I was not a beauty, but also that I should, without fail, become a good sensible boy.

In spite of this, moments of despair often visited me; I fancied that there was no happiness on earth for a person with such a wide nose, such thick lips, and such small grey eyes as I had; I besought God to work a miracle, to turn me into a beauty, and all I had in the present, or might have in the future, I would give in exchange for a handsome face.

CHAPTER XVIII

PRINCE IVAN IVANITCH

WHEN the Princess had heard the verses, and had showered praises upon the author, grandmamma relented, began to address her in French, ceased to call her *you*,* and *my dear*, and invited her to come to us in the evening, with all her children, to which the Princess consented; and after sitting a while longer, she took her departure.

So many visitors came that day with congratulations, that the court-yard near the entrance was never free, all the morning, from several carriages.

"Good morning, cousin," said one of the guests, as he entered the room, and kissed grandmamma's hand.

He was a man about seventy years of age, of lofty stature, dressed in a military uniform, with big epaulets, from beneath the collar of which a large white cross was visible, and with a calm, frank expression of countenance. The freedom and simplicity of his movements surprised me. His face was still notably handsome, in spite of the fact that only a thin semicircle of hair was left on the nape of the neck, and that the position of his upper lip betrayed the lack of teeth.

Prince Ivan Ivanitch had enjoyed a brilliant career while he was still very young at the end of the last century, thanks to his noble character, his handsome person, his noteworthy bravery, his distinguished and powerful family, and thanks especially to good luck. He remained in the ser-

* That is to say, she called her *thou*.

vice, and his ambition was very speedily so thoroughly gratified that there was nothing left for him to wish for in that direction. From his earliest youth he had conducted himself as if preparing himself to occupy that dazzling station in the world in which fate eventually placed him. Therefore, although he encountered some disappointments, disenchantments, and bitterness in his brilliant and somewhat vainglorious life, such as all people undergo, he never once changed his usual calm character, his lofty manner of thought, nor his well-grounded principles of religion and morality, and won universal respect, which was founded not so much on his brilliant position as upon his firmness and trustworthiness. His mind was small; but, thanks to a position which permitted him to look down upon all the vain bustle of life, his cast of thought was elevated. He was kind and feeling, but cold and somewhat haughty in his intercourse with others. This arose from the circumstance that he was placed in a position where he could be of use to many people, and he endeavoured by his cold manner to protect himself against the incessant petitions and appeals of persons who only wished to take advantage of his influence. But this coldness was softened by the condescending courtesy of a man of *the very highest society*.

He was cultivated and well read; but his cultivation stopped at what he had acquired in his youth; that is to say, at the close of the last century. He had read everything of note which had been written in France on the subject of philosophy and eloquence during the eighteenth century; he was thoroughly acquainted with all the best products of French literature, so that he was able to quote passages from Racine, Corneille, Boileau, Molière, Montaigne, and Fénelon, and was fond of doing so; he possessed a brilliant knowledge of mythology, and had studied with profit

the ancient monuments of epic poetry in the French translations; he had acquired a sufficient knowledge of history from Ségur; but he knew nothing at all of mathematics beyond arithmetic, nor of physics, nor of contemporary literature; he could maintain a courteous silence in conversation, or utter a few commonplaces, about Goethe, Schiller, and Byron, but he had never read them. In spite of this French and classical cultivation, of which so few examples still exist, his conversation was simple; and yet this simplicity concealed his ignorance of various things, and exhibited tolerance and an agreeable tone. He was a great enemy of all originality, declaring that originality is the bait of people of bad tone. Society was a necessity to him, wherever he might be living; whether in Moscow or abroad, he always lived generously, and on certain days received all the town. His standing in town was such that an invitation from him served as a passport to all drawing-rooms, and many young and pretty women willingly presented to him their rosy cheeks which he kissed with a kind of fatherly feeling; and other, to all appearances, very important and respectable people, were in a state of indescribable joy when they were admitted to the Prince's parties.

Very few people were now left, who, like grand-mamma, had been members of the same circle, of the same age, possessed of the same education, the same view of matters; and for that reason he especially prized the ancient friendly connection with her, and always showed her the greatest respect.

I could not gaze enough at the Prince. The respect which everyone showed him, his huge epaulets, the particular joy which grandmamma manifested at the sight of him, and the fact that he alone did not fear her, treated her with perfect ease, and even had the daring to address her as *ma cousine*, inspired me with a reverence for him

which equalled if it did not excel that which I felt for grandmamma. When she showed him my verses, he called me to him, and said—

“Who knows, cousin, but this may be another Derzhavin?”

Thereupon he pinched my cheek in such a painful manner that if I did not cry out it was because I guessed that it must be accepted as a caress.

The guests dispersed. Papa and Volodya went out; only the Prince, grandmamma, and I remained in the drawing-room.

“Why did not our dear Natalya Nikolaevna come?” asked Prince Ivan Ivanitch suddenly, after a momentary silence.

“Ah! *mon cher*,” replied grandmamma, bending her head and laying her hand upon the sleeve of his uniform, “she certainly would have come had she been free to do as she wished. She writes to me that Pierre proposed that she should come, but that she had refused because they had had no income at all this year; and she writes: ‘Moreover, there is no reason why I should remove to Moscow this year with the whole household. Liubotchka is still too young; and as for the boys who are to live with you, I am more easy about them than if they were to live with me.’ All that is very fine!” continued grandmamma, in a tone which showed very plainly that she did not consider it fine at all. “The boys should have been sent here long ago, in order that they might learn something, and become accustomed to society. What kind of education was it possible to give them in the country? Why, the eldest will soon be thirteen, and the other eleven. You have observed, cousin, that they are perfectly untamed here: they don’t know how to enter a room.”

“But I don’t understand,” replied the prince: “why these daily complaints of reduced circumstances? He has a very handsome property,

and Nataschinka's Khabarovka, where I played in the theatre with you once upon a time, I know as well as the five fingers on my own hand. It's a wonderful estate, and it must always bring in a handsome revenue."

"I will tell you as a true friend," broke in grandmamma, with an expression of sadness: "it seems to me that all excuses are simply for the purpose of allowing *him* to live here alone, to lounge about at the clubs, at dinners, and to do God knows what else. But she suspects nothing. You know what an angel of goodness she is; she believes *him* in everything. He assured her that it was necessary to bring the children to Moscow, and to leave her alone with that stupid governess in the country, and she believed him. If he were to tell her that it was necessary to whip the children as Princess Varvara Ilinitchna whips hers, she would probably agree to it," said grandmamma, turning about in her chair, with an expression of thorough disdain. "Yes, my friend," pursued grandmamma, after a momentary pause, taking in her hand one of the two handkerchiefs, in order to wipe away the tear which made its appearance: "I often think that *he* can neither value her nor understand her, and that, in spite of all her goodness and love for him, and her efforts to conceal her grief—I know it very well—she cannot be happy with him; and mark my words, if he does not . . ."

Grandmamma covered her face with her handkerchief.

"Eh, my good friend," said the Prince reproachfully. "I see that you have not grown any wiser. You are always mourning and weeping over an imaginary grief. Come, are you not ashamed of yourself? I have known *him* for a long time, and I know him to be a good, attentive, and very fine husband, and, what is the principal thing, a perfectly honest man."

Having involuntarily overheard this conversation which I ought not to have heard, I took myself out of the room, on tiptoe, in violent emotion.

CHAPTER XIX

THE IVINS

"VOLODYA! Volodya! the Ivins!" I shouted, catching sight from the window of three boys in blue overcoats, with beaver collars, who were crossing from the opposite sidewalk to our house, headed by their young and dandified tutor.

The Ivins were related to us, and were of about our own age; we had made their acquaintance, and struck up a friendship soon after our arrival in Moscow.

The second Ivin, Serozha, was a dark-complexioned, curly-headed boy, with a determined, turned-up little nose, very fresh red lips, which seldom completely covered the upper row of his white teeth, handsome dark-blue eyes, and a remarkably alert expression of countenance. He never smiled, but either looked quite serious, or laughed heartily with a distinct, ringing, and very attractive laugh. His original beauty struck me at first. I felt for him an unconquerable liking. It was sufficient for my happiness to see him: at one time, all the powers of my soul were concentrated upon this wish; when three or four days chanced to pass without my having seen him, I began to feel bored and sad even to tears. All my dreams, both waking and sleeping, were of him: when I lay down to sleep, I willed to dream of him; when I shut my eyes, I saw him before me, and cherished the vision as the greatest bliss. I could not have brought myself to confess this feeling to anyone in the world, much as I prized it. He

evidently preferred to play with Volodya and to talk with him, rather than with me, possibly because it annoyed him to feel my restless eyes constantly fixed upon him, or simply because he felt no sympathy for me: but nevertheless I was content; I desired nothing, demanded nothing, and was ready to sacrifice everything for him. Besides the passionate attachment with which he inspired me, his presence aroused another feeling in a no less powerful degree—a fear of paining or offending him in any way, or of displeasing him. I felt as much fear for him as love, perhaps because his face had a haughty expression, or because, despising my own appearance, I valued the advantage of beauty too highly in others, or, what is most probable of all, because this is an infallible sign of love. The first time Serozha spoke to me, I lost my wits to such a degree at this unexpected bliss, that I turned pale, blushed, and could make no reply. He had a bad habit of fixing his eyes upon some one spot, when he was thinking, and of winking incessantly, at the same time twitching his nose and eyebrows. Everyone thought that this trick spoiled him, but I thought it so charming that I involuntarily acquired the same habit; and a few days after I had become acquainted with him, grandmamma inquired, Did my eyes pain me, that I was blinking like an owl? Not a word about love was ever uttered between us; but he felt his power over me, and exercised it unconsciously but tyrannically in our childish intercourse. And, no matter how hard I tried to tell him all that was in my mind, I was too much afraid of him to resolve on frankness; I endeavoured to seem indifferent, and submitted to him without a murmur. At times his influence appeared to me oppressive, intolerable; but it was not in my power to escape from it.

It saddens me to think of that fresh, beautiful feeling of unselfish and unbounded love, which

died away without having found vent, or met with a return.

It is strange, how, when I was a child, I strove to be like a grown-up person, and how, since I have ceased to be a child, I have often longed to be like one.

How many times did this desire not to seem like a child in my intercourse with Serozha restrain the feeling which was ready to pour forth, and cause me to dissimulate! I not only did not dare to kiss him, which I very much wanted to do at times, to take his hand, to tell him that I was glad to see him, but I did not even dare to call him Serozha, but kept strickly to Sergiei. So it was settled between us. Every expression of sentiment betrayed childishness, and that he who permitted himself anything of the sort was still a *little boy*. Without having, as yet, gone through those bitter trials which lead adults to caution and coldness in their intercourse with each other, we deprived ourselves of the pure enjoyment of tender, childish affection, simply through the strange desire to imitate *grown-up people*.

I met the Ivins in the anteroom, exchanged greetings with them, and then flew headlong to grandmamma. I announced that the Ivins had arrived; and from my expression one would have supposed that this news must render her completely happy. Then, without taking my eyes from Serozha, I followed him into the drawing-room, watching his every movement. While grandmamma was telling him that he had grown a great deal, and fixed her penetrating eyes upon him, I experienced that sensation of terror and hope which a painter must experience when he is awaiting the verdict upon his work from a judge whom he respects.

Herr Frost, the Ivins' young tutor, with grandmamma's permission, went into the front garden with us, seated himself on a green bench, crossed

his legs picturesquely, placing between them a cane with a bronze head, and began to smoke his cigar with the air of a man who is very well satisfied with his own conduct.

Herr Frost was a German, but a German of a very different cut from our good Karl Ivanitch. In the first place, he spoke Russian correctly, he spoke French with a bad accent, and generally enjoyed, especially among the ladies, the reputation of being a very learned man ; in the second place, he wore a red moustache, a big ruby pin in his black satin cravat, the ends of which were tucked under his suspenders, and light blue trousers with spring-bottoms and straps ; in the third place, he was young, had a handsome, self-satisfied exterior, and remarkably fine muscular legs. It was evident that he set a particular value on this last advantage ; he considered its effect irresistible on members of the female sex, and it must have been with this view that he tried to exhibit his legs in the most conspicuous place, and, whether standing or sitting, always put his calves in motion. He was a type of the young Russian German, who aspires to be a gay fellow, and a lady's man.

It was very lively in the garden. Our game of robbers could not have been more successful ; but one circumstance came near ruining everything. Serozha was the robber : as he was hastening in pursuit of travellers, he stumbled, and in full flight struck his knee with so much force against a tree that I thought he had shivered it into splinters. In spite of the fact that I was the gendarme, and that my duty consisted in capturing him, I approached, and sympathetically inquired whether he had hurt himself. Serozha got angry with me : he clinched his fists, stamped his foot, and in a voice which plainly betrayed that he had injured himself badly, he shouted at me—

“ Well, what's this ? After this we'll have no

more games ! Come, why don't you catch me ? why don't you catch me ? " he repeated several times, glancing sideways at Volodya and the elder Ivin, who, in their character of travellers, were leaping and running along the path ; and all at once he gave a shriek, and rushed after them with a loud laugh.

I cannot describe how this heroic conduct impressed and captivated me. In spite of the terrible pain, he not only did not cry, but he did not even show that he was hurt, and never for a moment forgot the game.

Shortly after this, when Ilinka Grap also joined our company, and we went upstairs to wait for dinner, Serozha had another opportunity of enslaving and amazing me with his marvellous manliness and firmness of character.

Ilinka Grap was the son of a poor foreigner who had once lived at my grandfather's, was indebted to him in some way, and now considered it his imperative duty to send his son to us very often. If he supposed that an acquaintance with us could afford any honour or satisfaction to his son, he was entirely mistaken ; for we not only did not make friends with Ilinka, but we only noticed him when we wanted to make fun of him. Ilinka Grap was a thin, tall, pale boy of thirteen, with a bird-like face, and a good-naturedly submissive expression. He was very poorly dressed, but his hair was always so excessively greased that we declared that, on sunny days, Grap's pomade melted and trickled down under his jacket. As I recall him now, I find that he was very willing to be of service, and a very quiet, kind boy ; but at that time he appeared to me as a contemptible being, whom it was not necessary to pity or even to think of.

When the game of robbers came to an end, we went upstairs and began to cut capers, and to show off various gymnastic tricks before each

other. Ilinka watched us with a timid smile of admiration, and when we proposed to him to do the same, he refused, saying that he had no strength at all. Serozha was wonderfully charming. He took off his jacket. His cheeks and eyes were blazing; he laughed incessantly, and invented new tricks; he leaped over three chairs placed in a row, trundled all over the room like a wheel, stood on his head on Tatischev's lexicon, which he placed in the middle of the room for a pedestal, and at the same time cut such funny capers with his feet that it was impossible to refrain from laughing. After this last performance he became thoughtful, screwed up his eyes, and went up to Ilinka with a perfectly sober face. "Try to do that; it really is not difficult." Grap, perceiving that general attention was directed to him, turned red, and declared, in a scarcely audible voice, that he could do nothing of the kind.

"And why won't he show off anyway? What a girl he is! he must stand on his head."

And Serozha took him by the hand.

"You must, you must stand on your head!" we all shouted, surrounding Ilinka, who at that moment was visibly terrified, and turned pale; then we seized his arms, and dragged him to the lexicon.

"Let me go, I'll do it myself! You'll tear my jacket," cried the unhappy victim. But these cries of despair imparted fresh animation to us; we were dying with laughter: the green jacket was cracking in every seam.

Volodya and the eldest Ivin bent his head down and placed it on the dictionary; Serozha and I seized the poor boy's thin legs, which he flourished in all directions, stripped up his trousers to the knee, and with great laughter turned them up; the youngest Ivin preserved the equilibrium of his whole body.

After our noisy laughter, we all became suddenly

silent ; and it was so quiet in the room, that the unfortunate Grap's breathing alone was audible. At that moment I was by no means thoroughly convinced that all this was so very laughable and amusing.

"There's a fine fellow, now," said Serozha, slapping him.

Ilinka remained silent, and in his endeavour to free himself flung his legs out in all directions. In one of these desperate movements, he struck Serozha in the eye with his heel in such a painful manner, that Serozha immediately released his leg, clasped his own eye, from which the unbidden tears were streaming, and pushed Ilinka with all his might. Ilinka, being no longer supported by us, went down on the floor with a crash, like some lifeless object, and all he could utter for his tears was :

"Why do you tyrannize over me so ?"

The woeful figure of poor Ilinka, with his tear-stained face, disordered hair, and his tucked-up trousers, under which his dirty boot-legs were visible, impressed us : we did not speak, and we tried to smile in a constrained fashion.

Serozha was the first to recover himself.

"There's a woman, a bawler," he said, pushing him lightly with his foot : "it's impossible to joke with him. Come, enough of that ; get up."

"I told you that you were a good-for-nothing little boy," said Ilinka angrily, and turning away he sobbed loudly.

"What ! you use your heels, and then scold !" screamed Serozha, seizing the lexicon, and swinging it over the head of the wretched boy, who never thought of defending himself, and only covered his head with his hands.

"There ! there ! Let's drop him, if he can't understand a joke. Let's go downstairs," said Serozha, laughing in an unnatural way.

I gazed with sympathy at the poor fellow, who

lay on the floor, hiding his face on the lexicon, and crying so that it seemed as if he were on the point of dying of the convulsions which shook his whole body.

"Hey, Sergiei!" I said to him, "why did you do that?"

"That's good! I didn't cry, I hope, when I cut my knee nearly to the bone to-day."

"Yes, that's true," I thought: "Ilinka is nothing but a bawler; but there's Serozha, he is so brave. What a manly fellow he is!"

I had no idea that the poor boy was crying, not so much from physical pain, as from the thought that five boys, whom he probably liked, had all agreed, without any cause, in hating and persecuting him.

I really cannot explain to myself the cruelty of this conduct. Why did I not go to him, protect him, comfort him? What had become of that sentiment of pity, which had formerly made me cry violently at the sight of a young daw which had been thrown from its nest, or a puppy which was to be thrown out of the garden, or a chicken which the cook was carrying off for soup?

Had this beautiful feeling been destroyed in me, by love for Serozha, and the desire to appear as manly in his sight as he was himself? That love, and that desire to appear manly, were not enviable qualities. They were the cause of the only dark spots in the pages of my childish memories.

CHAPTER XX

THE GUESTS ASSEMBLE

JUDGING from the special activity perceptible in the pantry, the brilliant illumination which imparted a new and festive aspect to objects in the drawing-room and salon, which had long been familiar to me, and particularly judging from the fact that Prince Ivan Ivanitch would not have sent his music for nothing, a large number of guests were expected for the evening.

I ran to the window at the sound of every passing carriage, put the palms of my hands to my temples and against the glass, and gazed into the street with impatient curiosity. Through the darkness, which at first covered all objects from the window, there gradually appeared, across the way, a long familiar shop, with a lantern; in an oblique line, a large house with two lighted windows on the lower floor; in the middle of the street some *Vanka*,* with two passengers, or an empty calash returning home at a foot-pace; but now a carriage drove up to the porch, and in the full conviction that it was the Ivins, who had promised to come early, I ran down to meet them in the ante-room. Instead of the Ivins, two ladies made their appearance behind the liveried arm which opened the door: one was large, and wore a blue cloak with a sable collar; the other, who was small, was all wrapped up in a green shawl, beneath which her little feet, shod in fur boots, alone were visible.

* Local term for a poor rustic driver, who enters service for the winter in town.

Paying no attention to my presence in the ante-room, although I considered it my duty to make my bow when these persons appeared, the little one walked up to the big one, and halted in front of her. The big one unwound the kerchief which covered the little one's head, unbuttoned her cloak, and when the liveried footman took charge of these things, and pulled off her little fur boots, there appeared from this much-wrapped-up individual, a wonderful twelve-year-old little girl, dressed in a low-necked white muslin frock, white pantalettes, and tiny black slippers. There was a black velvet ribbon on her little white neck; her head was a mass of dark chestnut curls, which suited her lovely face admirably, and fell upon her white shoulders behind so beautifully, that I would not have believed Karl Ivanitch himself if he had not told me that they curled so because they had been twisted up in bits of "The Moscow Gazette" ever since the morning, and pinched with hot irons. She seemed to have been born with that curly head.

A striking feature of her face was her unusually large, prominent, half-closed eyes, which formed a strange but agreeable contrast to her small mouth. Her lips were tightly closed; and her eyes had such a serious look, and the general expression of her face was such, that you would not look for a smile on it; and therefore a smile was all the more enchanting.

I crept to the door of the hall, endeavouring to remain unperceived, and decided that it would be well to walk back and forth feigning meditation, and that I was not aware that guests had arrived. When they had traversed half the apartment, I apparently came to myself, made my bow, and informed them that grandmamma was in the drawing-room. Madame Valakhina, whose face pleased me extremely, especially because I discerned in it a strong resemblance

to her daughter Sonitchka, nodded graciously to me.

Grandmamma appeared to be very glad to see Sonitchka ; she called her close to her, adjusted one of her curls which had fallen over her forehead, and, gazing attentively at her face, she said, "What a charming child !" Sonitchka smiled and blushed so prettily that I blushed also as I looked at her.

"I hope you will not be bored here, my little friend," said grandmamma, taking hold of her chin, and raising her little face. "I beg that you will be merry and dance as much as possible. Here is one lady and two cavaliers," she added, turning to Madame Valakhina, and touching me with her hand.

This bringing us together pleased me so much that it made me blush again.

Conscious that my shyness was increasing, and hearing the noise of another carriage as it drove up, I deemed it best to make a retreat. In the ante-room I found Princess Kornakova with her son and an incredible number of daughters. The daughters were all exactly alike in countenance—they resembled the Princess, and were ugly : therefore no one of them arrested my attention. As they took off their cloaks and shook out their trains, they all began suddenly to talk in thin little voices as they fussed and laughed at something—probably because there were so many of them. Etienne was a tall, fleshy lad of fifteen, with a bloodless face, sunken eyes with blue circles beneath them, and hands and feet which were enormous for his age : he was awkward, had a rough and disagreeable voice, but appeared very well satisfied with himself, and according to my views he was precisely the sort of boy who gets whipped with a switch.

We stood for quite a while opposite each other without uttering a word, examining each other attentively. Then we approached a little nearer,

have been eight months paying Marya Vasilievna twenty kopeks, and it's the same in my case, and it's two years since Petrushka"—

"Hold your tongue!" shouted the young prince, turning pale with rage. "I'll tell all about it."

"You'll tell all, you'll tell all!" went on the footman. "This is bad, your excellency," he added with a peculiar expression as we entered the drawing-room, and he went to the wardrobe with the cloaks.

"That's right, that's right!" said an approving voice behind us in the ante-room.

Grandmamma had a peculiar gift for expressing her opinion of people by adding to a certain tone on certain occasions the singular and plural pronouns of the second person. Although she employed *you* and *thou* in direct opposition to the generally received usage, these shades of meaning acquired an entirely different significance in her mouth. When the young prince approached her, she at first addressed a few words to him, calling him *you*, and regarding him with such an expression of scorn that had I been in his place I should have become utterly abashed. But evidently Etienne was not a boy of that stamp: he not only paid no heed to grandmamma's reception, but even to her person, and saluted the whole company, if not gracefully at least without constraint. Sonitchka occupied all my attention. I remember that when Volodya, Etienne, and I were talking together in a part of the room from which Sonitchka was visible, and she could see and hear us, I spoke with pleasure; when I had occasion to utter what seemed to me an amusing or manly remark, I spoke loudly, and glanced at the drawing-room door; but when we changed to another place from which it was impossible to be seen or heard from the drawing-room, I remained silent, and found no further pleasure in the conversation.

The drawing-room and salon gradually filled with

guests. As always happens at children's parties, there were several large children among the number, who were not willing to miss an opportunity of dancing and making merry, if only for the sake of pleasing the hostess.

When the Ivins arrived, instead of the pleasure which I generally experienced at meeting Serozha, I was conscious of a certain strange vexation because he would see Sonitchka and would show off to her.

CHAPTER XXI

BEFORE THE MAZURKA

"EH! you are evidently going to have dancing," said Serozha, coming from the drawing-room, and pulling a pair of new kid gloves from his pocket: "I must put on my gloves."

"What's that for? we have no gloves," I thought: "I must go upstairs, and hunt for some."

But although I rummaged all the drawers, all I found was, in one, our green travelling mittens; in another, one kid glove which was of no service whatever to me, in the first place because it was very old and dirty, in the second because it was too large for me, and especially because the middle finger was wanting, having been cut off long ago, probably by Karl Ivanitch for a sore hand. Nevertheless I put this remnant of a glove upon my hand, and regarded intently that place upon my middle finger which was always smeared with ink.

"If Natalya Savischna were only here, she would surely find me some gloves." It was impossible to go downstairs in such a plight, because, if they asked me why I did not dance, what could I say? To remain here was equally impossible, because I should infallibly be caught. "What am I to do?" I said, flourishing my hands.

"What are you doing here?" asked Volodya, running in: "go, engage your lady, it will begin directly."

"Volodya," I said to him, displaying my hand, with two fingers sticking out of the dirty glove, and expressing in my voice that I was in a state which

bordered on despair, "Volodya, you never thought of this."

"Of what?" said he impatiently. "Ah! gloves," he added quite indifferently, catching sight of my hand. "No, I didn't, in fact. You must ask grandmamma. What will she say?" and, without pausing to reflect, he ran downstairs.

The cold-bloodedness with which he expressed himself on a point which seemed to me so weighty, reassured me, and I hastened to the drawing-room, totally oblivious of the grotesque glove on my left hand.

Approaching grandmamma's arm-chair with caution, and touching her mantle lightly, I said in a whisper:

"Grandmamma! what are we to do? We have no gloves!"

"What, my dear?"

"We have no gloves," I repeated, drawing nearer and nearer, and laying both hands on the arm of her chair.

"And what is this?" she said all at once, seeing my left hand. "See here, my dear," she went on, turning to Madame Valakhina, "this young man has made himself elegant in order to dance with your daughter."

Grandmamma held me firmly by the hand, and gazed seriously but inquiringly at her guests until all had satisfied their curiosity, and the laugh had become general.

I should have been very much troubled if Serozha had seen me during the time, when, frowning with shame, I vainly endeavoured to tear my hand free; but I was not at all pained in the presence of Sonitchka, who laughed until her eyes were filled with tears, and all her curls fluttered about her rosy little face. I understood that her laugh was too loud and natural to be mocking: on the contrary, we laughed together, and seemed to come nearer to each other as we exchanged

glances. This episode of the glove, although it might end badly, gained me this advantage, that it placed me on easy terms with a circle which had always seemed to me most terrible—the drawing-room circle; I felt not the slightest timidity in the hall.

The sufferings of shy people arise from their uncertainty as to the opinion which people have formed of them: as soon as this opinion is openly demonstrated—in whatever form it may occur—this suffering ceases.

How charming Sonitchka Valakhina was, as she danced opposite me in the French quadrille with the clumsy young Prince! How sweetly she smiled when she gave me her little hand in the chain! How prettily her golden curls waved in measure, how naively she brought her tiny feet together! When, in the fifth figure, my partner left me and went to the other side, while I waited for the time and prepared to execute my solo, Sonitchka closed her lips seriously and looked aside. But her fear for me was unnecessary. I boldly made my *chassé* to the front, *chassé* to the rear, and my glide; and when I approached her, I playfully showed her my glove with my two fingers sticking out. She laughed excessively, and her little feet tripped about upon the waved floor more bewitchingly than ever. I still remember how, when we formed a circle and all joined hands, she bent her little head, and, without removing her hand from mine, scratched her little nose with her glove. I can still see all this as though it were directly before my eyes, and I still hear the quadrille from "The Maid of the Danube," to the music of which all this took place.

The second quadrille commenced, and I danced it with Sonitchka. After seating myself beside her, I felt extremely awkward, and did not know in the least what to say to her. When my silence had lasted too long, I began to fear that she would take me for a fool; and I resolved to rescue her from any

such error on my account, at any cost. "You are an inhabitant of Moscow?" I said to her, and after receiving an answer in the affirmative, I went on: "For my part, I have never yet frequented the capital," with a calculation as to the effect which the word "frequent" would produce. Nevertheless, I felt that although this was a very brilliant beginning, and fully proved my knowledge of the French tongue, I was incapable of continuing the conversation in this strain. Our turn to dance would not come very soon, but the silence was renewed. I gazed at her uneasily, desirous of knowing what impression I had produced, and awaiting her assistance. "Where did you find such a funny glove?" she inquired suddenly; and this question caused me the greatest pleasure and relief. I explained that the glove belonged to Karl Ivanitch, went into some rather ironical details concerning Karl Ivanitch's person—how ridiculous he was when he took off his red cap; and how he had once fallen from a horse, when dressed in his green overcoat, straight into a puddle, and so forth. The quadrille passed off without our perceiving it. All this was very delightful; but why did I ridicule Karl Ivanitch? Should I have lost Sonitchka's good opinion if I had described him with the love and respect which I felt for him?

When the quadrille came to an end, Sonitchka said, "Thank you," with as sweet an expression as though I had really deserved her gratitude. I was in ecstasies. I was beside myself with joy, and did not know myself whence I had obtained such daring, confidence, and even boldness. "Nothing can confuse me," I thought, promenading about the salon quite unembarrassed; "I am ready for anything."

Serôzha proposed to me to be his *vis-à-vis*. "Very well," said I, "I have no partner, but I will find one." Casting a decisive glance about the room, I perceived that all the ladies were engaged

CHAPTER XXII

THE MAZURKA

THE young man whom I had robbed of his lady, danced in the first couple of the mazurka. He sprang from his place, holding his lady by the hand, and, instead of making the *pas de Basques* as Mimi had taught us, he simply ran forward. When he had reached the corner, he halted, cracked his heels, turned around, and went skipping on farther.

As I had no partner for the mazurka, I sat behind grandmamma's high chair, and looked on.

"Why does he do that?" I pondered. "That's not at all as Mimi taught us. She declared that everybody danced the mazurka on their toes, bringing their feet round in a gliding circular form; and it turns out that they don't dance that way at all. There are the Ivins and Etienne and all of them dancing, and they are not doing the *pas de Basques*. And our Volodya has picked up the new fashion! It's not bad! • And how lovely Sonitchka is! There she goes!"

I was very merry.

The mazurka was nearing its end. Several elderly ladies and gentlemen came up to take leave of grandmamma, and departed. The lackeys, skilfully keeping out of the way of the dancers, brought the dishes into the back room. Grandmamma was evidently weary, and seemed to speak unwillingly and in a very drawling way: the musicians indolently began the same air for the thirtieth time. The big girl with whom I had danced caught sight of me as she was going through

a figure, and smiling treacherously—she must have wanted to please grandmamma—she led Sonitchka and one of the innumerable princesses up to me. “Rose or nettle?” said she.

“Ah, so you are here!” said grandmamma, turning round in her chair. “Go, my dear, go.”

Although at that moment I would much rather have hid my head under grandmamma’s chair, than emerge from behind it, how could I refuse? I stood up, and said, “Rose,” as I glanced timidly at Sonitchka. Before I could recover myself, someone’s hand in a white kid glove rested in mine, and the princess started forward with a pleasant smile, without the least suspicion that I did not in the least know what to do with my feet.

I knew that the *pas de Basques* was out of place, unsuitable, and that it might even put me to shame; but the well-known sounds of the Mazurka acting upon my ear, communicated a familiar movement to the acoustic nerves, which, in turn, communicated it to my feet; and the latter, quite involuntarily, and to the amazement of all beholders, began the fatal circular gliding step on the tips of the toes. As long as we proceeded straight ahead, we got on after a fashion; but when we turned I observed, that, unless I took some precautions, I should certainly get in advance. In order to avoid a catastrophe I stopped short, with the intention of making the same kind of *knee* which the young man in the first couple made so beautifully. But at the very moment when I separated my feet, and was preparing to spring, the princess, circling hastily around me, looked down at my feet with an expression of stupid curiosity and amazement. That look finished me. I lost my self-command to such an extent, that instead of dancing I stamped my feet up and down in one spot in a fashion which reminded nothing on earth, and finally came to a dead standstill. Everyone stared at me, some with surprise, others with curiosity, with amuse-

ment, or sympathy ; grandmamma alone looked on with complete indifference.

" You should not dance if you do not know how," said papa's angry voice in my ear ; and thrusting me aside with a light push, he took my partner's hand, danced a turn with her in antique fashion, to the vast delight of the lookers-on, and led her to her seat. The mazurka immediately came to an end.

Lord ! why dost thou chastise me so terribly ?

Everybody despises me, and will scorn me. The paths to everything, love, friendship, honour, are shut to me. All is lost ! Why did Volodya make signs to me which everyone saw, and which could render me no assistance ? Why did that hateful princess look at my feet like that ? Why did Sonitchka—she was lovely, but why did she smile just then ? Why did papa blush, and seize my hand ? was even he ashamed of me ? Oh, this was frightful ! If mamma had been there, she would not have blushed for her Nikolinka. And my fancy bore me far away to this sweet vision. I recalled the meadow in front of the house, the tall linden trees in the garden, the clear pond over which the swallows fluttered, the blue sky in which hung transparent white clouds, the perfumed stacks of fresh hay ; and many other joyous, soothing memories were borne in upon my distracted imagination.

CHAPTER XXIII

AFTER THE MAZURKA

AT supper, the young man who had danced in the first couple sat down at our children's table, and paid special attention to me, which would have flattered my vanity not a little, if I had been capable of any sentiment whatever after the catastrophe which had occurred to me. But the young man seemed determined to cheer me up on any terms. He played with me, he called me a fine fellow ; and when none of the grown-up people were looking at us, he poured me glasses of wine out of various bottles, and made me drink them. At the end of the supper, when the waiter poured me only a quarter of a glass of champagne from his napkin-wrapped bottle, and the young man insisted that he should pour it full, and made me swallow it at one gulp, I felt an agreeable warmth through all my body, and a special kindness towards my jolly protector, and I laughed excessively over something.

All at once sounds of the " Grandfather " dance resounded from the salon, and the guests began to rise from the table. My friendship with the young man immediately came to an end ; he went off to the big people, and I, not daring to follow, approached with a curiosity to hear what Madame Valakhina was saying to her daughter.

" Just another little half-hour," said Sonitchka entreatingly.

" It is really impossible, my angel."

" Come, for my sake, please," she said coaxingly.

"Will it make you happy if I am ill to-morrow?" said Madame Valakhina, and was so impudent as to smile.

"Oh, you permit it! we may stay?" cried Sonitchka, dancing with joy.

"What is to be done with you? Well, then, go, dance. Here's a cavalier for you," she said, pointing at me.

Sonitchka gave me her hand, and we ran into the salon.

The wine which I had drunk, Sonitchka's presence and gaiety, caused me to completely forget my miserable scrape in the mazurka. I cut amusing capers with my feet; I imitated a horse, and went at a gentle trot, lifting my legs proudly, then I stamped on one spot like a ram who is angry at a dog, and laughed heartily, without caring in the least what impression I might produce upon the spectators. Sonitchka, too, never ceased to laugh; she laughed when we circled round hand in hand, she laughed when she looked at some old gentleman who lifted his feet with care and stepped over a handkerchief, pretending that it was very difficult for him to do it, and she nearly died of laughter when I leaped almost to the ceiling in order to display my agility.

As I passed through grandmamma's study, I glanced at myself in the mirror: my face was bathed in perspiration, my hair was in disorder, the tuft on the crown of my head stood up worse than ever; but the general expression of my countenance was so merry, kind, and healthy, that I was even pleased with myself.

"If I were always like this," I thought, "I might be able to please."

But when I glanced again at the very beautiful little face of my partner, there was in it, besides the expression of gaiety, health, and freedom from care, which had pleased me in my own, so much gentle and elegant beauty, that I was vexed with

myself. I comprehended how stupid it was of me to call the attention of such a wonderful being to myself. I could not hope for a reciprocal feeling, and, indeed, I did not think of it: my soul was filled with bliss independent of that. I did not understand that in return for the love which filled my soul with joy, still greater happiness might be demanded, and something more was to be desired than that this feeling might never end. All was well with me. My heart fluttered like a dove, the blood poured into it incessantly, and I wanted to cry.

When we went through the corridor, past the dark storeroom under the stairs, I glanced at it, and thought: What bliss it would be if I could live for ever with her in that dark storeroom! and if nobody knew that we lived there.

"It's very jolly now, isn't it?" I said in a quiet, trembling voice, and hastened my steps, frightened not so much at what I had said, but at what I had been minded to say.

"Yes, very," she replied, turning her little head towards me, with such a frank, kind expression that my fears ceased.

"Especially after supper. But if you only knew how sorry [I wanted to say *pained*, but did not dare] I am that you are going away so soon, and that we shall not see each other any more!"

"Why shall we not see each other?" said she, regarding intently the toes of her slippers, and drawing her fingers along the grated screen which we were passing. "Mamma and I go to the Tversky boulevard every Tuesday and Friday. Don't you go to walk?"

"I shall ask to go without fail on Tuesday; and if they won't let me go, I will run away alone, and without my hat. I know the way."

"Do you know," said Sonitchka suddenly, "I always say *thou* to the little boys who come to our house; let us call each other *thou*. Wilt

thou ? " she added, throwing back her little head, and looking me straight in the eye.

At this moment we entered the salon, and the second, lively part of "Grandfather" was commencing. "Begin," I said at a point when the noise and music could drown my words.

"Say *thou*,"* corrected Sonitchka, with a laugh.

"Grandfather" ended, and I had not managed to utter a single phrase with *thou*, although I never ceased inventing such as would allow of several repetitions of that pronoun. I had not sufficient courage. "Wilt thou?" resounded in my ears, and produced a kind of intoxication. I saw nothing and nobody but Sonitchka. I saw them lift her locks, and tuck them behind her ears, disclosing portions of her brow and temples which I had not seen before; I saw them wrap her up in the green shawl so closely, that only the tip of her little nose was visible; I observed that if she had not made a little aperture near her mouth with her rosy little fingers, she would infallibly have suffocated; and I saw how she turned quickly towards us, as she descended the stairs with her mother, nodded her head, and disappeared through the door.

Volodya, the Ivins, the young Prince, and I, were all in love with Sonitchka, and we followed her with our eyes as we stood on the stairs. I do not know to whom in particular she nodded her little head; but at that moment I was firmly convinced that it was done for me.

As I took leave of the Ivins, I conversed and shook hands quite unconstrainedly, and even rather coldly, with Serozha. If he understood that on that day he had lost my love, and his power over me, he was surely sorry for it, though he endeavoured to appear quite indifferent.

* Nikolai used *davai-te*, the second person plural. Sonitchka said *davai*, second person singular.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN BED

“HOW could I love Serazha so passionately, and so long?” I meditated, as I lay in bed. “No, he never understood, he never was capable of prizing my love, and he was never worthy of it. And Sonitchka? how charming! ‘Wilt thou?’ ‘It is thy turn to begin.’”

I sprang up on all fours, as I pictured to myself her little face in lively colours, covered my head with the coverlet, tucked it under me on all sides, and when no opening remained anywhere, I lay down, and, with a pleasant sensation of warmth, buried myself in sweet visions and memories. Fixing my gaze immovably upon the lining of the wadded quilt, I saw her as clearly as I had seen her an hour before; I conversed with her mentally, and that conversation, though utterly lacking in sense, afforded me indescribable delight, because *thee*, to *thee*, and *thine* occurred in it constantly.

These visions were so clear that I could not sleep for sweet emotion, and I wanted to share my superabundance of bliss with someone.

“The darling!” I said almost aloud, turning abruptly on the other side. “Volodya! are you awake?”

“No,” he replied in a sleepy voice: “what is it?”

“I am in love, Volodya. I am decidedly in love with Sonitchka.”

“Well, what of it?” he answered, stretching himself.

“O Volodya! you cannot imagine what is going on within me; here I was just now lying tucked up in the coverlet, and I saw her so plainly, so plainly, and I talked with her; it was simply marvellous! And, do you know, when I lie and

think of her I grow sad, and I want to weep dreadfully, God knows why."

Volodya moved.

"There's only one thing I wish," I went on: "that is, to be always with her, to see her always, and nothing else. And are you in love? Confess the truth, Volodya!"

It's odd, but I wanted everybody to be in love with Sonitchka, and then I wanted them all to tell me.

"What is that to you?" said Volodya, turning his face towards me—"perhaps."

"You don't want to sleep; you were making believe!" I cried, perceiving by his shining eyes that he was not thinking of sleep in the least; and I flung aside the coverlet. "Let's discuss her. She's charming, isn't she? So charming that if she were to say to me: 'Nikolascha! jump out of the window, or throw yourself into the fire'—well, I swear I should do it immediately," said I, "and with joy. Ah, how bewitching!" I added, as I called her before me in imagination, and in order to enjoy myself in this manner to the fullest extent, I rolled abruptly over on the other side, and thrust my head under the pillow. "I want to cry dreadfully, Volodya!"

"What a fool!" said he smiling, and then was silent for a while. "I'm not a bit like you: I think that, if it were possible, I should like at first to sit beside her and talk."

"Ah! so you are in love, too?" I interrupted.

"And then," continued Volodya, smiling tenderly, "then I would kiss her little fingers, her eyes, her lips, her nose, her tiny feet—I would kiss all."

"Nonsense!" cried I from under the pillow.

"You don't understand anything about it," said Volodya contemptuously.

"Yes, I do understand, but you don't, and you're talking nonsense," I said through my tears.

"Well, there's nothing to cry about. She's a genuine girl!"

CHAPTER XXV

THE LETTER

ON the 16th of April, nearly six months after the day which I have described, father came upstairs to us, during our lesson hour, and announced to us that we were to set out for the country with him that night. My heart contracted at this news, and my thoughts turned at once to my mother.

The following letter was the cause of our unexpected departure:—

PETROVSKOE, April 12.

I have but just received your kind letter of April 3rd, at ten o'clock in the evening, and, in accordance with my usual custom, I answer it immediately. Fedor brought it from town last night, but, as it was late, he gave it to Mimi. And Mimi, under the pretext that I was ill and unnerved, did not give it to me for a whole day. I really have had a little fever, and, to tell the truth, this is the fourth day that I have been too ill to leave my bed.

Pray do not be alarmed, my dear; I feel very well, and if Ivan Vasilitch will permit me, I intend to get up to-morrow.

On Friday of last week, I went to ride with the children; but the horses stuck in the mud close to the entrance to the highway, near that very bridge which has always frightened me. The day was very fine, and I thought I would go as far as the highway on foot, while they pulled the calash out. When I reached the chapel, I was very much fatigued, and sat down to rest; and about half an hour elapsed while they were summoning people to drag the carriage out. I felt cold, particularly in my feet, for I had on thin-soled shoes, and they were wet through. After dinner I felt a chill and a hot turn, but I continued to walk according to the usual programme, and after tea I sat down to play a duet with Liubotchka. (You would not recognize her, she has made such progress!). But imagine my surprise, when I found that I could not count

the time. I began to count several times, but my head was all in confusion, and I felt a strange noise in my ears. I counted one, two, three, then all at once eight and fifteen; and the chief point was that I saw that I was lying, and could not correct myself. Finally Mimi came to my assistance, and put me to bed, almost by force. This, my dear, is a circumstantial account of how I became ill, and how I myself am to blame. The next day, I had quite a high fever, and our good old Ivan Vasilitch came: he still lives with us, and promises to set me free speedily in God's world once more. A wonderful old man is that Ivan Vasilitch! When I had the fever, and was delirious, he sat beside my bed all night, without closing his eyes; and now he knows that I am writing, he is sitting in the boudoir with the girls, and from my bedroom I can hear him telling them German tales, and them dying with laughter as they listen.

La belle Flamande, as you call her, has been staying with me for two weeks past, because her mother has gone off visiting somewhere, and she evinces the most sincere affection by her care for me. She intrusts me with all her secrets of the heart. If she were in good hands, she might turn out a very fine girl, with her beautiful face, kind heart, and youth; but she will be utterly ruined in the society in which she lives, judging from her own account. It has occurred to me, that, if I had not so many children, I should be doing a good deed in taking charge of her.

Liubotchka wanted to write to you herself; but she has already torn up the third sheet of paper, and says: "I know what a scoffer papa is; if you make a single mistake, he shows it to everybody." Katenka is as sweet as ever, Mimi as good and stupid.

Now I will talk to you about serious matters. You write that your affairs are not going well this winter, and that it is indispensable that you should take the money from Khabarovka. It surprises me that you should even ask my consent to that. Does not what belongs to me belong equally to you?

You are so kind and good, that you conceal the real state of things, from the fear of troubling me: but I guess that you have probably lost a great deal at play, and I assure you that I am not angry at you; therefore, if the matter can only be arranged, pray do not think too much of it, and do not worry yourself needlessly. I have become accustomed not to count upon your winnings for the children, but even (excuse me) on your whole estate. Your winnings cause me as little pleasure as your losses cause pain; the only thing which does pain me is your unhappy passion for gambling, which deprives me of a portion of your tender attachment, and makes me tell you

such bitter truths as I tell you now ; and God knows how this hurts me ! I shall not cease to pray God for one thing, that he will save you, not from poverty (what is poverty ?) but from that frightful situation, when the interests of the children, which I am bound to protect, shall come into conflict with ours. Heretofore the Lord has fulfilled my prayer : you have not passed the line beyond which we must either sacrifice our property—which no longer belongs to us, but to our children—or—and it is terrible to think of, but this horrible misfortune continually threatens us. Yes, it is a heavy cross which the Lord has sent to both of us.

You write about the children, and return to our old dispute : you ask me to consent to send them to some educational institution. You know my prejudices against such education.

I do not know, my dear friend, whether you will agree with me ; but I beseech you, in any case, to promise, out of love for me, that as long as I live, and after my death, if it shall please God to part us, never to do this.

You write that it is indispensable that you should go to Petersburg about our affairs. Christ be with you, my friend ; go and return as speedily as possible. It is so wearisome for all of us without you ! The spring is wonderfully beautiful. The balcony door has already been taken down, the paths to the orangery were perfectly dry four days ago, the peach trees are in full bloom, the snow lingers in a few spots only, the swallows have come, and now Liubotchka has brought me the first spring flowers. The doctor says I shall be quite well in three days, and may breathe the fresh air, and warm myself in the April sun. Farewell, dear friend : pray do not worry about my illness, nor about your losses ; finish your business as speedily as possible, and come to us with the children for the whole summer. I am making famous plans for passing it, and you alone are lacking to their realization.

The remaining portion of this letter was written in French, in a cramped and uneven hand, on a second scrap of paper. I translate it word for word :—

Do not believe what I wrote to you about my illness ; no one suspects how serious it is. I alone know that I shall never rise from my bed again. Do not lose a moment : come and bring the children. Perhaps I may be able to embrace them once again, and bless them : that is my last wish. I know what a terrible blow I am dealing you ; but

it matters not : sooner or later you would receive it from me, or from others. Let us try to bear this misfortune with firmness, and hope in God's mercy. Let us submit to His will.

Do not think that what I write is the raving of a delirious imagination : on the contrary, my thoughts are remarkably clear at this moment, and I am perfectly composed. Do not comfort yourself with vain hopes, that these are but the dim deceitful presentiments of a timid soul. No, I feel I know—and I know because God was pleased to reveal this to me—that I have not long to live.

Will my love for you and the children end with this life ? I know that this is impossible. I feel too strongly at this moment to think that this feeling, without which I cannot conceive of existence, could ever be annihilated. My soul cannot exist without its love for you ; and I know that it will exist for ever, from this one thing, that such a sentiment as my love could never arise, were it ever to come to an end.

I shall not be with you, but I am firmly convinced that my love will never leave you ; and this thought is so comforting to my heart that I await my fast approaching death, calmly, and without terror.

I am calm, and God know that I have always regarded death, and still regard it, as a passage to a better life ; but why do tears crush me ? Why deprive the children of their beloved mother ? Why deal you so heavy, so unlooked-for a blow ? Why must I die, when your love has rendered life boundlessly happy for me ?

May His holy will be done !

I can write no more for tears. Perhaps I shall not see you. I thank you, my precious friend, for all the happiness with which you have surrounded me in this life ; I shall pray God there, that he will reward you. Farewell, dear friend ; remember, when I am no more, that my love will never abandon you, wherever you may be. Farewell Volodya, farewell my angel, farewell Benjamin, my Nikolinka.

Will they ever forget me ?

This letter enclosed a note in French, from Mimi, which read as follows :—

The sad presentiments of which she speaks are but too well confirmed by the doctor's words. Last night she ordered this letter to be taken to the post at once. Thinking that she said this in delirium, I waited until this morning, and then made up my mind to open it. No sooner had I done so, than Natalya Nikolaevna asked me what I had

done with the letter, and ordered me to burn it if it had not been sent. She keeps speaking of it and declares that it will kill you. Do not delay your coming, if you wish to see this angel while she is still left with us. Excuse this scrawl. I have not slept for three nights. You know how I love her !

Natalya Savischna, who had passed the entire night of the 11th of April in mamma's chamber, told me, that, after writing the first part of the letter, mamma laid it on the little table beside her, and went to sleep.

"I confess," said Natalya Savischna, "that I dozed in the arm-chair myself, and my stocking fell from my hands. But, about one o'clock, I heard, in my dreams, that she seemed to be conversing with someone ; I opened my eyes, and looked : she was sitting up in bed, my little dove, with her little hands folded thus, and her tears were flowing in streams. ' So all is over ? ' she said, and covered her face with her hands. I sprang up and began to inquire, ' What is the matter with you ? '

" ' Ah, Natalya Savischna, if you only knew what I have just seen ! '

" But in spite of all my questions, she would say no more ; she merely ordered me to bring the little table, wrote something more, commanded me to seal the letter in her presence, and send it off immediately. After that, things grew worse and worse."

CHAPTER XXVI

WHAT AWAITED US IN THE COUNTRY

ON the 25th of April we descended from the travelling carriage at the porch of the Petrovskoe house. Papa had been very thoughtful when we left Moscow, and when Volodya asked him whether mamma was not ill, he looked sadly at him, and nodded in silence. During the journey he evidently grew more composed; but as we approached home his face assumed a more and more mournful expression, and when, on alighting from the calash, he asked Foka, who ran panting out, "Where is Natalya Nikolaevna?" his voice was not firm, and there were tears in his eyes. Good old Foka glanced at us, dropped his eyes, and, opening the door of the anteroom, he turned aside and answered:

"She has not left her room for six days."

Milka, who, as I afterwards learned, had not ceased to howl mournfully since the very day that mamma was taken ill, sprang joyously at papa, leaped upon him, whined, and licked his hands; but he pushed her aside, and went into the drawing-room, thence into the boudoir, from which a door led directly into the bedroom. The nearer he came to the room, the more evident became his disquiet, as was shown by all his movements: as he entered the boudoir, he walked on tiptoe, hardly drew his breath, and crossed himself before he could make up his mind to grasp the handle of the closed door. At that moment Mimi, dishevelled and tear-stained, ran in from the corridor. "Ah, Piotr Alexandrovitch," she said in a whisper, with an expression of

genuine despair, and then, observing that papa was turning the handle, she added almost inaudibly, "it is impossible to pass here; we must go in by the other door."

Oh, how sadly this affected my childish imagination, which was attuned to sorrow, with a fearful foreboding!

We went to the maids' room. In the corridor we encountered Akim, the little fool, who always amused us with his grimaces; but at that moment he not only did not seem laughable to me, but nothing struck me so painfully as his mindless, indifferent face. In the maids' room two maids, who were sitting over their work, rose in order to curtsy to us, with such a sorrowful expression that I was frightened. Traversing Mimi's room next, papa opened the door of the bedroom, and we entered. To the right of the door were two windows, hung with cloths; at one of them sat Natalya Savischna, with her spectacles on her nose, knitting a stocking. She did not kiss us as she generally did, but merely rose, looked at us through her spectacles, and the tears poured down her face in streams. I did not like it at all to have people begin to cry as soon as they looked at us, when they had been quite calm before.

At the left of the door stood a screen, and behind the screen the bed, a little table, a little cabinet spread with medicines, and the big arm-chair in which dozed the doctor; beside the bed stood a young, extremely fair, and remarkably pretty girl, in a white morning dress, who, with her sleeves turned back, was applying ice to mamma's head, which I could not see at that moment. This girl was *la belle Flamande*, of whom mamma had written, and who, later on, played such an important rôle in the life of the whole family. As soon as we entered, she removed one hand from mamma's head, and arranged the folds on the bosom of her gown, then said in a whisper, "She is unconscious."

I was very wretched at that moment, but I involuntarily noted all these trifles. It was nearly dark in the room, it was hot, and there was a mingled odour of mint, cologne-water, chamomile, and Hoffmann's drops. This odour impressed me to such a degree that when I smell it, or when I even recall it, fancy immediately bears me back to that dark, stifling chamber, and reproduces every detail, even the most minute, of that terrible moment.

Mamma's eyes were open, but she saw nothing. Oh, I shall never forget that dreadful look! It expressed so much suffering.

They led us away.

When I afterwards asked Natalya Savischna about mamma's last moments, this is what she told me:

"After you were taken away, my dear one was restless for a long time as though something oppressed her, then she dropped her head on her pillow, and dozed as quietly and peacefully as an angel from heaven. I only went out to see why they did not bring her drinks. When I returned my darling was throwing herself all about, and beckoning your papa to her; he bent over her, and it was evident that he lacked the power to say what he wished to; she could only open her lips, and begin to groan, 'My God! Lord! The children, the children!' I wanted to run and fetch you, but Ivan Vasilitch stopped me and said, 'It will excite her more, it is better not.' After that she only raised her hand and dropped it again. What she meant by that, God only knows. I think that she was blessing you in your absence, and it was plain that the Lord did not grant her to see her little children before the end. Then my little dove raised herself, made this motion with her hand, and all at once she spoke in a voice which I cannot bear to think of, 'Mother of God, do not desert them!' Then the pain attained her heart; it was evident from her eyes that the poor woman was suffering

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tortures ; she fell back on the pillows, caught the bed-clothes in her teeth, and her tears flowed. my dear."

" Well, and then ? " I asked.

Natalya Savlschna said no more ; she turned away and wept bitterly.

Mamma died in terrible agony.

CHAPTER XXVII

SORROW

LATE in the evening of the following day I wanted to see her once more. I overcame the involuntary feeling of terror, opened the door gently, and entered the hall on tiptoe.

In the middle of the room, upon a table, stood the coffin, and round it stood lighted candles in tall silver candlesticks. In a distant corner sat the dyachok,* reading the Psalter in a low, monotonous voice.

I paused at the door, and gazed; but my eyes were so swollen with weeping, and my nerves were so unstrung, that I could distinguish nothing. Everything ran together in a strange fashion—lights, brocade, velvet, the great candelabra, the rose-colored pillow bordered with lace, the frontlet,† the cap with ribbons, and the transparent light of the wax candles. I climbed upon a chair in order to see her face, but in the place where it was the same pale-yellowish transparent object presented itself to me. I could not believe that that was her face. I began to examine it attentively, and little by little I began to recognize the dear familiar features. I shivered with terror when I had convinced myself that it was she; but why were the closed eyes so sunken? Why that dreadful pallor, and the blackish spot beneath the skin on one cheek? Why

* Clerk-ecclesiastical.

† The *vyentchik* is made of satin or paper, with pictures of Christ, Mary, and St. John, and laid upon the brow of the corpse, in the Russian Church.—Tr.

was the expression of the whole face so stern and cold? Why were the lips so pale, and their outline so very beautiful, so majestic, and so expressive of an unearthly calm that a cold shudder ran down my back and through my hair when I looked upon it?

I gazed, and felt that some incomprehensible, irresistible power was drawing my eyes to that lifeless face. I did not take my eyes from it, and imagination sketched me a picture of blooming life and happiness. I forgot that the dead body which lay before me, and upon which I stupidly gazed, as upon an object which had nothing in common with me, was *she*. I fancied her now in one, now in another situation—alive, merry, smiling. Then all at once some feature in the pale face upon which my eyes rested struck me. I recalled the terrible reality, shuddered, but did not cease my gaze. And again visions usurped the place of reality, and again the consciousness of the reality shattered my visions. At length imagination grew weary, it ceased to deceive me; the consciousness of reality also vanished, and I lost my senses. I do not know how long I remained in this state, I do not know in what it consisted; I only know, that, for a time, I lost consciousness of my existence, and experienced an exalted, indescribably pleasant and sorrowful delight.

Perhaps, in flying hence to a better world, her beautiful soul gazed sadly back upon that in which she left us; she perceived my grief, took pity upon it, and descended to earth on the pinion of love, with a heavenly smile of compassion, in order to comfort and bless me.

The door creaked, a dyachok entered the room to relieve the other. This noise roused me; and the first thought which occurred to me was that since I was not crying, and was standing on a chair, in an attitude which had nothing touching about it, the dyachok might take me for an unfeeling boy, who

had climbed on the chair out of pity or curiosity. I crossed myself, made a reverence, and began to cry.

As I now recall my impressions, I find that that moment of self-forgetfulness was the only one of genuine grief. Before and after the burial, I never ceased to weep, and was sad ; but it puts me to shame to recall that sadness, because a feeling of self-love was always mingled with it ; at one time a desire to show that I was more sorry than anybody else ; again, solicitude as to the impression which I was producing upon others ; at another time, an aimless curiosity which caused me to make observations upon Mimi's cap and the faces of those present. I despised myself, because the feeling I experienced was not exclusively one of sorrow, and I tried to conceal all others ; for this reason my regret was insincere and unnatural. Moreover, I experienced a sort of pleasure in knowing that I was unhappy. I tried to arouse my consciousness of unhappiness ; and this egotistical feeling, more than all the rest, stifled genuine grief within me.

After passing the night in a deep and quiet sleep, as is always the case after great sorrow, I awoke with my tears dried and my nerves calm. At ten o'clock we were summoned to the mass for the dead, which was celebrated before the body was taken away. The room was filled with house-servants and peasants, who came in tears to take leave of their mistress. During the service, I cried in proper fashion, crossed myself, and made reverences to the earth ; but I did not pray in spirit, and was tolerably cold-blooded. I was worrying because my new half-coat, which they had put on me, hurt me very much under the arms. I meditated how not to spot the knees of my trousers too much ; and I took observations, on the sly, of all those who were present. My father stood at the head of the coffin. He was as pale as his handkerchief, and restrained his tears

with evident difficulty. His tall figure in its black coat, his pale, expressive face, his movements, graceful and assured as ever, when he crossed himself, bowed, touching the ground with his hand, took the candle from the hand of the priest, or approached the coffin, were extremely effective. But, I do not know why, the fact that he could show himself off so effectively at such a moment was precisely what did not please me. Mimi stood leaning against the wall, and appeared hardly able to keep her feet. Her dress was crumpled and flecked with down; her cap was pushed on one side; her swollen eyes were red; her head shook. She never ceased to sob in a voice that rent the soul, and she incessantly covered her face with her hands and her handkerchief. It seemed to me that she did this in order to hide her countenance from the spectators, and to rest for a moment after her feigned sobs. I remembered how she had told papa, the day before, that mamma's death was such a terrible shock to her that she had no hope of living through it; that it deprived her of everything; that that angel (as she called mamma) had not forgotten her before her death, and had expressed a desire to secure her future and Katenka's for ever from care. She shed bitter tears as she said this, and perhaps her grief was genuine, but it was not pure and exclusive. Liubotchka, in her black frock, with mourning trimmings, was all bathed in tears, and dropped her little head, glancing rarely at the coffin, and her face expressed only childish terror. Katenka stood beside her mother, and, in spite of the long face she had put on, was as rosy as ever. Volodya's frank nature was frank even in his grief. He stood at times with his thoughtful, immovable glance fixed on some object; then his mouth began suddenly to twitch, and he hastily crossed himself, and bowed in reverence. All the strangers who were present at

the funeral were intolerable to me. The phrases of consolation which they uttered to father, that she would be better off there, that she was not for this world, aroused a kind of anger in me.

What right had they to speak of her and mourn for her? Some of them in speaking of us called us *orphans*. As if we did not know without their assistance that children who have no mother are called by that name! It evidently pleased them to be the first to bestow it upon us, just as they generally make haste to call a young girl who has just been married, *Madame* for the first time.

In the far corner of the hall, almost concealed by the open door of the pantry, knelt a bowed and grey-haired woman. With clasped hands, and eyes raised to heaven, she neither wept nor prayed. Her soul aspired to God, and she besought Him to let her join the one whom she loved more than all on earth, and she confidently hoped that it would be soon.

"There is one who loved her truly!" thought I, and I was ashamed of myself.

The mass came to an end; the face of the dead woman was uncovered, and all present, with the exception of ourselves, approached the coffin one by one and kissed it.

One of the last to draw near and take leave of her was a peasant woman, leading a beautiful five-year-old girl, whom she had brought hither, God only knows why. At that moment, I unexpectedly dropped my moist handkerchief, and stooped to pick it up. But I had no sooner bent over, than a frightful piercing shriek startled me: it was so full of terror that if I live a hundred years I shall never forget it, and when I recall it a cold chill always runs all over my body. I raised my head: on a tabouret beside the coffin, stood the same peasant woman, holding in her arms with difficulty the little girl, who with her tiny hands thrust out before her, her frightened

little face turned aside, and her staring eyes fastened upon the face of the corpse, was shrieking in a wild and dreadful voice. I uttered a shriek in a tone which I think must have been even more terrible than the one which had startled me, and ran out of the room.

It was only at that moment that I understood whence came that strong, heavy odour, which, mingling with the odour of the incense, filled the room; and the thought that that face, which a few days before had been full of beauty and tenderness, that face which I loved more than anything in the world, could excite terror, seemed for the first time to reveal to me the bitter truth, and filled my soul with despair.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LAST SAD MEMORIES

MAMMA was dead, but our life pursued its usual course. We went to bed and got up at the same hours, and in the same rooms; morning and evening tea, dinner, supper, all took place at the usual time; the tables and chairs stood in the same places; nothing was changed in the house or in our manner of life, only—she was no more.

It seemed to me, that, after such unhappiness, all must change: our ordinary manner of life appeared to me an insult to her memory, and recalled her absence too vividly.

After dinner, on the evening before the funeral, I wanted to go to sleep; and I went to Natalya Savischna's room, intending to install myself in her bed, on the soft feather-bed, and beneath the warm wadded coverlet. When I entered, Natalya Savischna was lying on her bed, and was probably asleep; hearing the noise of my footsteps, she rose up, flung aside the woollen cloth which protected her head from the flies, and, adjusting her cap, seated herself on the edge of the bed.

"What is it? They have sent you to get some rest, my dear? Lie down."

"No, Natalya Savischna," I said, holding her hand. "I have not come for that at all—I only just came—but you are weary yourself; you had better lie down."

"No, batuschka, I have slept enough," she said (I knew that she had not slept for three days,

for grief). "And besides, I am not sleepy now," she added with a deep sigh.

I wanted to discuss our misfortunes with Natalya Savischna. I knew her honesty and love, and it would have been a comfort to me to weep with her.

"Natalya Savischna," I said, seating myself on the bed, after a brief silence, "did you expect this?"

The old woman looked at me in amazement and curiosity, probably because she did not understand why I asked her that.

"Who could expect this?" I repeated.

"Ah, my dear," said she, casting a glance of the tenderest sympathy upon me, "it was not to be expected, and I cannot believe it even now. Such an old woman as I ought to have laid her old bones in the grave long ago. The old master, Prince Nikolai Mikhailovitch, your grandfather (may his memory be eternal!) had two brothers, and a sister Annuchka; and I have buried them all, and they were all younger than I am, batiuschka; and now, for my sins evidently, it is my fate to outlive her. His holy will be done! He took her because she was worthy, and He wants good people there."

This simple thought impressed me as a comfort, and I moved nearer Natalya Savischna. She folded her hands on her bosom, and looked upwards; her sunken, tearful eyes expressed great but quiet suffering. She cherished a firm hope that God would not long part her from her upon whom she had for so many years concentrated all the power of her love.

"Yes, my dear, it does not seem long since I was her nurse, and dressed her, and she called me Nascha. She would run to me, seize me with her plump little hands, and begin to kiss me, and to say:

"My Naschik, my beauty, my little turkey!

"And I would say in jest:

" 'It's not true, matuschka, you do not love me; wait until you grow up, and marry, and forget your Nascha.' She would begin to reflect. 'No,' she would say, 'it will be better not to marry, if I cannot take Mascha with me; I will never desert Nascha.' And now she has deserted me, and has not waited for me. And she loved me, the dear dead woman! And, in truth, who was there that she did not love? Yes, batiuschka, it is impossible for you to forget your mamma. She was not a human being, but an angel from heaven. When her soul reaches the kingdom of heaven, it will love you there, and rejoice over you."

"Why do you say when she reaches the kingdom of heaven, Natalya Savischna?" I asked. "Why, I think she is there now."

"No, batiuschka," said Natalya Savischna, lowering her voice, and sitting closer to me on the bed: "her soul is here now," and she pointed upwards. She spoke almost in a whisper, and with so much feeling and conviction that I involuntarily raised my eyes, and inspected the cornice in search of something. "Before the soul of the just goes to paradise, it undergoes forty changes, my dear, and it can stay in its home for forty days."

She talked long in this strain, and with as much simplicity and faith as though she were relating the most every-day occurrences, which she had witnessed herself, and on the score of which it would never enter anyone's head to entertain the slightest doubt. I held my breath as I listened to her; and although I did not understand very well what she said, I believed her entirely.

"Yes, batiuscha, she is here now; she is looking at us; perhaps she hears what we are saying," said Natalya Savischna, in conclusion.

She bent her head, and became silent. She wanted a handkerchief to wipe her falling tears; she rose, looked me straight in the face, and said, in a voice which trembled with emotion:

"The Lord has brought me many degrees nearer to Him through this. What is left for me here now? Whom have I to love for? Whom have I to love?"

"Don't you love us?" I said reproachfully, hardly restraining my tears.

"God knows how I love you, my darlings; but I have never loved anyone as I loved her, and I never can love anyone in that way."

She could say no more, but turned away, and sobbed loudly.

I no longer thought of sleeping: we sat opposite each other in silence, and wept.

Foka entered the room; perceiving our condition, and probably not wishing to disturb us, he glanced at us timidly and in silence, and paused at the door.

"What do you want, Fokascha?" asked Natalya Savischna, wiping her eyes.

"A pound and a half of raisins, four pounds of sugar, and three pounds of rice, for the *kulya*."*

"Immediately, immediately, *batiuschka*," said Natalya Savischna, taking a hasty pinch of snuff; and she went to her cupboard with brisk steps. The last traces of the grief called forth by our conversation had vanished when she set about her duty, which she considered as extremely important.

"What are the four pounds for?" she grumbled; as she took out the sugar, and weighed it in the scales. "Three and a half will be enough," and she took several bits from the scales. "Whoever heard the like? I gave out eight pounds of rice yesterday, and now more is demanded. You will have it so, Foka Demiditch, but I won't let you have the rice. That Vanka is glad because the house is upside down: he thinks no one will notice. No, I won't shut my eyes to attempts

* A dish which is carried to the church at the mass in memory of a dead person.

on my master's goods. Now, was such a thing ever seen, as eight pounds?"

"What is to be done? He says that it's all gone."

"Well, there, take it, there! Let him have it!"

I was surprised at this transition from the affecting sentiment with which she had talked with me, to this grumbling and petty calculation. On reflecting upon the subject afterwards, I saw, that, in spite of what was going on in her soul, she retained sufficient presence of mind to busy herself with her affairs, and the force of habit drew her to her customary employments. Sorrow acted so powerfully upon her, that she did not find it necessary to dissemble, and she was able to occupy herself with extraneous objects: she would not even have been able to understand how such a thought could occur to anyone.

Vanity is a feeling which is utterly incompatible with genuine grief; and, at the same time, this feeling is so strongly interwoven with the nature of many, that even the deepest woe rarely expels it. Vanity exhibits itself in sorrow by the desire to appear sad, or unhappy, or firm; and these low desires, which we do not acknowledge, but which rarely forsake us even in the deepest trouble, deprive it of force, dignity, and truth. But Natalya Savischna was so deeply wounded by her unhappiness, that not a single desire lingered in her soul, and she only lived from habit.

After giving Foka the provisions he had asked for, and reminding him of the party which must be prepared for the entertainment of the clergy, she dismissed him, took her stocking, and seated herself beside me again.

The conversation turned again upon the same subject as before; and again we wept, and again dried our eyes.

These conversations with Natalya Savischna were repeated every day; her quiet tears and calm,

devout words brought me comfort and consolation.

But we were soon parted. Three days after the funeral, the whole household removed to Moscow, and I was fated never to see her more.

Grandmother only received the terrible news on our arrival, and her grief was extraordinary. We were not admitted to her presence, because she lay unconscious for a whole week, and the doctor feared for her life, the more so as she not only would not take any medicine, but would speak to no one, did not sleep, and took no nourishment. Sometimes, as she sat alone in her chamber, in her arm-chair, she suddenly broke into a laugh, then began to sob, but shed no tears; then she was seized with convulsions, and uttered frightful and incoherent words in a voice of madness. She felt the need of blaming someone for her misery; and she said terrible things, spoke to some invisible person with unusual energy, sprang from her chair, paced the room in long and rapid strides, and then fell senseless.

I entered her room on one occasion. She was sitting in her arm-chair, as usual, and was calm to all appearance, but her glance startled me. Her eyes were very wide open, but their gaze was wavering and stupid; she looked straight at me, but she could not have seen me. Her lips began a slow smile, and she spoke in a voice of touching gentleness: "Come here, my dear; come here, my angel." I thought that she was addressing me, and approached nearer; but she did not look at me. "Ah, if you only knew, my love, what torments I have suffered, and how glad I am that you have come!" Then I understood that she fancied she saw mamma, and halted. "They told me you were dead," she went on, with a frown. "What nonsense! Could you die before me?" and she gave a dreadful hysteric laugh.

Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow; but this same

necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief, and heals them. For this reason the moral nature of man is more active than the physical. Grief never kills.

After the lapse of a week, grandmamma could weep, and her condition improved. Her first thought, when she came to herself, was of us; and her love for us increased. We never left her arm-chair; she cried softly, spoke of mamma, and tenderly caressed us.

It could not enter the mind of anyone who looked upon grandmamma's grief, that she was exaggerating it, and the expressions of that grief were forcible and touching; but I do not know why I sympathised more with Natalya Savischna, and to this day I am convinced that no one loved and mourned mamma so purely and so sincerely as that simple, affectionate creature.

The happy days of childhood ended for me with mamma's death, and a new epoch began—the epoch of boyhood; but as my recollections of Natalya Savischna, whom I never saw again, and who exercised such a powerful and beneficent influence over my career and the development of my sensibility, belong to the first epoch, I will say a few words more about her and her death.

After our departure, as we were afterwards informed, she remained in the village, and found the time hang heavy on her hands from lack of occupation. Although all the clothes-presses were still in her hands, and she never ceased to turn over their contents, alter the arrangement, hang things up, and pack them away again, yet she missed the noise and turmoil of a country house which is inhabited by its owners, to which she had been accustomed from her childhood. Grief, the change in her manner of life, the absence of responsibilities, speedily developed an old complaint to which she had long been inclined. Just a year after mamma's

death, dropsy made its appearance, and she took to her bed.

It was hard, I think, for Natalya Savischna to live alone, and still harder for her to die alone, in the great empty house at Petrovskoe, without relatives or friends. Everyone in the house loved and revered Natalya Savischna ; but she entertained no friendship with anyone, and was proud of it. She considered that in her position of a housekeeper who enjoyed the confidence of her master, and had in her charge so many chests filled with all sorts of property, a friendship with anyone would infallibly lead to partiality and a criminal condescension. For that reason, or, possibly, because she had nothing in common with the other servants, she held herself aloof from all, and said that she had neither gossips nor cronies in the house, and she would not countenance any attacks upon her master's property.

She sought and found consolation by confiding her feeling to God in fervent prayer ; but sometimes, in those moments of weakness to which we are all subject, when man finds his best comfort in the tears and sympathy of a living being, she put her little dog on her bed (it licked her hand, and fixed its yellow eyes upon her), talked to it, and wept softly as she petted it. When the poodle began to howl piteously, she endeavoured to quiet it, and said, " Stop ; I know, without your telling me, that I shall die soon."

A month before her death, she took from her chest some white calico, white muslin, and pink ribbons ; with the assistance of her maid she made herself a white dress and a cap, and arranged everything which was requisite for her funeral, down to the most minute detail. She also sorted over the chests belonging to her master, and transferred them with the greatest precision, in writing, to the overseer. There remained to her two silk dresses, an old shawl which grandmamma had given her

at some time or other, and grandfather's military uniform which had also been given to her for her own. Thanks to her care, the embroidery and galloon on the uniform were perfectly fresh, and the cloth had not been touched by the moths.

Before her death, she expressed a wish that one of these dresses, the pink one, should be given to Volodya for a dressing-gown or jacket, and the other, the brown checked one, to me for the same purpose, and the shawl to Liubotchka. The uniform she bequeathed to whichever of us should first become an officer. All the rest of her property, and her money, with the exception of forty roubles which she laid aside for her funeral and masses, she left to her brother. Her brother, who had received his freedom long before, resided in some distant government, and led a very dissipated life ; hence she had had no intercourse with him during her lifetime.

When Natalya Savischna's brother presented himself to receive his inheritance, and the deceased's entire property proved to consist of twenty-five paper roubles, he would not believe it, and said that it could not be that the old woman, who had lived for sixty years in a wealthy family, and had had everything in her hands, had lived in a miserly way all her life, and had fretted over every scrap, had left nothing. But this was actually the case.

Natalya Savischna suffered for two months from her complaint, and bore her pain with a truly Christian patience ; she did not grumble or complain, but merely prayed incessantly, as was her custom. She confessed with joy, and received the communion and extreme unction, an hour before her death.

She begged forgiveness of all the house-servants for any injuries which she might have done them, and besought her priest, Father Vasili, to say to all of us, that she did not know how to express her thanks for all our kindness, and prayed us to pardon

her if she had pained anyone by her stupidity ; " but I never was a thief, and I can say that I never cheated my masters out of a thread." This was the only quality in herself which she valued.

Having put on the wrapper and cap which she had prepared, and propped herself up on the pillows, she never ceased until the moment of death to converse with the priest. She reminded him that she had not left anyone poor, gave him ten roubles, and begged him to distribute it in the parish. Then she crossed herself, lay back, sighed for the last time, and uttered the name of God in a joyous tone.

She quitted life without regret ; she did not fear death, but accepted it as a blessing. This is often said, but how rarely is it true ! Natalya Savischna could not fear death, because she died firm in the faith and fulfilling the law of the Gospels. Her whole life had been pure, unselfish love and self-sacrifice.

What if her creed might have been more lofty, if her life might have been devoted to higher aims ? is this pure soul any the less deserving of love and admiration on that account ?

She accomplished the best and grandest deed in this life : she died without regret or fear.

She was buried, in accordance with her wish, not far from the chapel which stood upon mamma's grave. The hillock, overgrown with brambles and burdock, beneath which she lies is enclosed within a black iron paling ; but I never forget to go from the chapel to that railing, and bow myself to the earth in reverence.

Sometimes I pause silent, midway between the chapel and that black fence. Painful reminiscences suddenly penetrate my soul. The thought comes to me : Did Providence connect me with these two beings merely in order that I might be made to mourn for them for ever ?

BOYHOOD

CHAPTER I

A JOURNEY WITHOUT RELAYS.

TWO equipages were again brought to the porch of the Petrovskoe house : one was a coach in which sat Mimi, Katenka, Liubotchka, and the maid, with the clerk Jakov on the box ; the other was a britchka, in which rode Volodya and I, and the footman Vasili who had recently been taken from *obrok*.*

Papa, who was to follow us to Moscow in a few days, stands on the porch without his hat, and makes the sign of the cross upon the window of the coach and the britchka.

" Well, Christ be with you ! drive on ! " Jakov and the coachman (we are travelling in our own carriage) take off their hats, and cross themselves. " No ! No ! In God's name ! "

The bodies of the carriage and britchka begin to jolt over the uneven road, and the birches along the great avenue fly past us one by one. I am not at all sad ; my mental gaze is fixed, not upon what I am leaving, but upon what awaits me. In proportion as the objects connected with the painful memories which have filled my mind until this moment retreat into the distance, these memories

* A sum paid to the proprietor by a serf in lieu of personal service. Many serfs of both sexes exercised various trades in the cities, and their *obrok* often yielded their masters quite a sum.

lose their force, and are speedily replaced by a sense of acquaintanceship with life, which is full of force, freshness, and hope.

Rarely have I spent days so—I will not say merily, for I was still rather conscience-stricken at the idea of yielding to merriment—but so agreeably, so pleasantly, as the four during which our journey lasted.

I had no longer before my eyes the closed door of mamma's room, which I could not pass without a shudder; nor the closed piano, which no one approached, but which everyone regarded with a sort of fear; nor the mourning garments (we all had on simple travelling suits), nor any of those things, which, by recalling to me vividly my irrevocable loss, made me avoid every appearance of life, from the fear of offending *her* memory in some way. Here, on the other hand, new and picturesque spots and objects arrest and divert my attention, and nature in its spring garb fixes firmly in my mind the cheering sense of satisfaction in the present, and bright hopes for the future.

Early, very early in the morning, pitiless Vasili, who was over-zealous as people always are in new situations, pulls off the coverlet, and announces that it was time to set out, and that everything is ready. Snuggle and rage and contrive as you will to prolong even for another quarter of an hour the sweet morning slumber, you see by Vasili's determined face that he is inexorable, and prepared to drag off the coverlet twenty times: so you jump up, and run out into the court to wash yourself.

The samovar is already boiling in the ante-room, and Mitka the outrider is blowing it until he is as red as a crab. It is damp and dark out of doors, as though the steam were rising from an odoriferous dung-heap; the sun illuminates the eastern sky with a bright cheerful light, and the straw roofs of the ample sheds surrounding the court-yard, which are sparkling with dew. Beneath them our horses

are visible, hitched about the fodder, and the peaceful sound of their mastication is audible.

A shaggy black dog who has lain down upon a dry heap of manure before dawn, stretches lazily, and betakes himself to the other side of the yard at a gentle trot, wagging his tail the while. The busy housewife opens the creaking gates, drives the meditative cows into the street, where the tramp, lowing and bleating of herds is already audible, and exchanges a word with her sleepy neighbour. Philip, with the sleeves of his shirt stripped up, draws the bucket from the deep well, all dripping with clear water, by means of the wheel, and empties it into an oaken trough, about which wideawake ducks are already splashing in the pool: and I gaze with pleasure upon Philip's handsome face with its great beard, and at the thick sinews and muscles which are sharply defined upon his bare, hairy arms when he makes any exertion.

Behind the screen where Mimi slept with the girls, and over which we had conversed in the evening, a movement was audible. Mascha runs past us repeatedly with various objects which she endeavours to conceal from our curiosity with her dress; and finally she opens the door, and calls us to drink our tea.

Vasili, in a fit of superfluous zeal, runs into the room incessantly, carries out, first one thing, then another, beckons to us, and in every way exhorts Marya Ivanovna to set out as speedily as possible. The horses are harnessed, and express their impatience by jingling their bells every now and then; the trunks, chests, caskets, and dressing-cases are again packed away, and we take our seats. But each time we find a mountain inside the britchka instead of a seat, so that it is impossible to understand how all this had been arranged the day before, and how we are going to sit now. One walnut-wood tea-caddy with a triangular cover, in particular, which is intrusted to us in the britchka,

is placed under me, and enrages me extremely. But Vasili says that will settle down, and I am forced to believe him.

The sun has but just risen above the dense white clouds which veil the east, and all the country round about is illuminated with a quietly cheerful light. All is so very beautiful about me, and I am so tranquil and light of heart. The road winds away in front like a wide, unconfined ribbon, amid fields of dry stubble, and herbage sparkling with dew. Here and there by the roadside we come upon a gloomy willow, or a young birch with small sticky leaves, casting a long, motionless shadow upon the dry clayey ruts and the short green grass of the highway. The monotonous sound of the wheels and bells does not drown the song of the larks, who circle close to the very road. The smell of moth-eaten cloth, of dust, and a certain sourness, which characterize our britchka, is overpowered by the perfume of the morning; and I feel a joyous uneasiness in my soul, a desire to do something, which is a sign of true enjoyment.

I had not managed to say my prayers at the post-house; but as I have more than once observed that some misfortune happens to me on the day when, from any circumstance, I forget to fulfil this ceremony, I make an effort to repair my mistake. I take off my cap, turn to the corner of the britchka, recite some prayers, and cross myself under my jacket so that no one may see it. But a thousand different objects distract my attention; and I repeat the same words of the prayer several times over, in my absence of mind.

Yonder on the footpath which winds beside the road, some slowly moving figures are visible; they are pilgrims. Their heads are enveloped in dirty cloths; sacks of birch-bark are bound upon their backs; their feet are wrapped in dirty, tattered footbands, and shod in heavy bast shoes. Swaying their staves in unison, and hardly glancing at us,

they move on with a heavy deliberate tread, one after the other ; and questions take possession of my mind—whither are they going, and why ? will their journey last long ? and will the long shadows which they cast upon the road, soon unite with the shadow of the willow which they must pass ? Here a calash with four post-horses comes rapidly to meet us. Two seconds more, and the faces which looked at us with polite curiosity at a distance of two arshins* have already flashed past ; and it seems strange that these faces have nothing in common with me, and that, in all probability, I shall never behold them again.

Here come two shaggy, perspiring horses, galloping along the side of the road in their halters, with the traces knotted up to the breech strap ; and behind, with his long legs and huge shoes dangling on each side of a horse, over whose forelock hangs the *dug*,† and who jingles his little bells almost inaudibly now and then, riding a young lad of a postilion, with his lamb's-wool cap cocked over one ear, drawling a long-drawn-out song. His face and attitude are expressive of so much lazy, careless content, that it seems to me it would be the height of bliss to be a post-boy, to ride the horses home, and sing some melancholy songs. Yonder, far beyond the ravine, a village church with its green roof is visible against the bright blue sky ; yonder is a hamlet, the red roof of a gentleman's house, and a green garden. Who lives in this house ? Are there children in it, father, mother, tutor ? Why should we not go to this house, and make the acquaintance of the owner ? Here is a long train of huge wagons harnessed to troikas of well-fed, thick-legged horses, which we are obliged to turn aside to pass. " What are you carrying ? " inquires Vasili of the first carter, who, with his

* An arshin is twenty-eight inches.

† Arch over the middle horse of a *troika*, or three horses harnessed abreast.

big feet hanging from the board which forms his seat, and flourishing his whip, regards us for a long time with an intent, mindless gaze, and only makes some sort of reply when it is impossible for him not to hear. "With what wares do you travel?" Vasili asks, turning to another team, upon whose railed-in front lies another carter beneath a new rug. A blonde head, accompanied by a red face and a reddish beard, is thrust out from beneath the rug for a moment; it casts a glance of indifferent scorn upon us, and disappears again; and the thought occurs to me that these carters surely cannot know who we are and whither we are going.

Absorbed in varied meditations, for an hour and a half I pay no heed to the crooked numbers inscribed upon the verst-stones. But now the sun begins to warm my head and back with more fervour, the road grows more dusty, the triangular cover of the tea-caddy begins to incommode me greatly, and I change my position several times. I am becoming hot and uncomfortable and bored. My whole attention is directed to the verst-stones, and the figures upon them. I make various mathematical calculations as to the time it will take us to reach the station.

"Twelve versts make one-third of thirty-six, and it is forty-one to Lipetz: consequently we have travelled only one-third and how much?" and so forth.

"Vasili," I say, when I observe that he is beginning to nod upon the box, "let me come on the box, that's a dear." Vasili consents; we change places; he immediately begins to snore and roll about so that there is no room left for anyone in the britchkā; and before me, from the height which I occupy, the most delightful picture presents itself—our four horses, Nerutchinskaya, the Deacon, Lyevaya, the pole-horse, and Apothecary, all of whom I know by heart in the most minute details and shades of each quality.

"Why is the Deacon on the right side to-day instead of on the left, Philip?" I inquired with some diffidence.

"Deacon?"

"And Nerutchinskaya is not drawing at all," I say.

"It is impossible to harness the Deacon on the left," says Philip, paying no attention to my last remark. "He is not the kind of a horse which can be harnessed on the left; on the left a horse is needed which is a horse, in one word, and he's not such a horse as that."

And with these words Philip bends over to the right, and, pulling on the reins with all his might, he begins to whip poor Deacon on the tail and legs, in a peculiar manner, from below; and in spite of the fact that Deacon tries with all his might, and drags the whole britchka along, Philip ceases this manœuvre only when he finds it necessary to take a rest and to tip his hat over on one side, for some unknown reason, although it was sitting very properly and firmly on his head already. I take advantage of this favourable opportunity, and beg Philip to let me drive. At first Philip gives me one rein, then another; and finally all six reins and the whip are transferred to my hands and, I am perfectly happy. I endeavour in every way to imitate Philip; I ask him whether *that* is right; but it generally ends in his leaving me dissatisfied; he says that one horse is pulling a great deal, and that another is not pulling at all, thrusts his elbow out in front of my breast, and takes the reins away from me. The heat increases continually. The little white clouds, which we call sheep, begin to puff up higher and higher, like soap-bubbles, then unite and take on a dark-grey tint. A hand, holding a bottle and a little package, emerges from the coach window. Vasili leaps from the box with wonderful agility, while we are in motion, and brings us little cheesecakes and kvas.

We all alight from the carriage at a sharp descent, and have a race to the bridge, while Vasili and Jakov put on the brakes, and support the coach on both sides with their hands as though they were able to restrain it if it fell. Then, with Mimi's permission, either I or Volodya seat ourselves in the coach, and Liubotchka or Katenka takes the place in the britchka. These changes afford the girls great pleasure, because, as they justly decide, it is jollier in the britchka. Sometimes, when it is hot and we are passing through the woods, we linger behind the coach, tear off green boughs, and build an arbor in the britchka. This moving arbor overtakes the coach, and Liubotchka pipes up in the most piercing of voices, which she never forgets to do on any occasion which affords her pleasure.

But here is the village where we are to dine and rest. We have already scented the smoke, the tar, the lamb-skins. We have heard the sound of conversation, footsteps and wheels; the bells already sound differently from what they did in the open fields; and *izbas* (cottages) appear on either side with their thatched roofs, carved wooden porches, and little windows with red and green shutters, between which the face of a curious woman peeps out. Here are the little peasant boys and girls, clad only in thin little smocks, who open their eyes wide, and throw out their hands and stand motionless on one spot, or run swiftly with their little bare feet through the dust, after the carriages, and try to climb upon the trunks, in spite of Philip's menacing gestures. The blonde inhabitants hasten up to the carriage from every direction, and endeavour, with alluring words and gestures, to entice the travellers from each other. Tpru! the gate creaks, the splinter-bar catches on the gate-posts, and we enter the court-yard. Four hours of rest and freedom!

CHAPTER II

THE THUNDER-STORM

THE sun declined towards the west, and burned my neck and cheeks intolerably with its hot, slanting rays. It was impossible to touch the scorching sides of the britchka. The dust rose thickly in the road, and filled the air. There was not the slightest breeze to carry it away. In front of us, and always at the same distance, rolled the tall, dusty body of the coach and the splinter-bar, from behind which, now and then, the knout was visible as the coachman flourished it, as well as his hat and Jakov's cap. I did not know what to do with myself; neither Volodya's face, which was black with dust, as he dozed beside me, nor the movements of Philip's back, nor the long shadow of our britchka, which followed us beneath the oblique rays of the sun, afforded me any diversion. My entire attention was directed to the verst-stones, which I perceived in the distance, and to the clouds, which had before been scattered over the sky, and had now collected into one big, dark mass. From time to time, the thunder rumbled afar. This last circumstance, more than all the rest, increased my impatience to reach the post-house as speedily as possible. A thunder-storm occasioned me an indescribably oppressive sensation of sadness and terror.

It was still ten versts to the nearest; but the great, dark, purple cloud which had collected, God knows whence, without the smallest breeze, was moving swiftly upon us. The sun, which is not

shudder ran through my hair, and my eyes were riveted on the beggar, in a stupor of fright.

Vasili, who bestows the alms on the journey, is giving Philip directions how to strengthen the trace; and it is only when all is ready, and Philip, gathering up the reins, climbs upon the box, that he begins to draw something from his side pocket. But we have no sooner started than a dazzling flash of lightning, which fills the whole ravine for a moment with its fiery glare, brings the horses to a stand, and is accompanied, without the slightest interval, by such a deafening clap of thunder that it seems as though the whole vault of heaven were falling in ruins upon us. The wind increases; the manes and tails of the horses, Vasili's cloak, and the edges of the apron, take one direction, and flutter wildly in the bursts of the raging gale. A great drop of rain fell heavily upon the leather hood of the britchka, then a second, a third, a fourth; and all at once it beat upon us like a drum, and the whole landscape resounded with the regular murmur of falling rain. I perceive, from the movement of Vasili's elbow, that he is untying his purse; the beggar, still crossing himself and bowing, runs close to the wheel, so that it seems as if he would be crushed. "Give-for-Christ's-sake!" At last a copper groschen flies past us, and the wretched creature halts with surprise in the middle of the road; his smock, wet through and through, and clinging to his lean limbs, flutters in the gale, and he disappears from our sight.

The slanting rain, driving before a strong wind, poured down as from a bucket; streams trickled from Vasili's frieze back into the puddle of dirty water which had collected on the apron. The dust, which at first had been beaten into pellets, was converted into liquid mud, through which the wheels splashed; the jolts became fewer, and turbid brooks flowed in the ruts. The lightning-

flashes grew broader and paler ; the thunder-claps were no longer so startling after the uniform sound of the rain.

Now the rain grows less violent ; the thunder-cloud begins to disperse ; light appears in the place where the sun should be, and a scrap of clear azure is almost visible through the greyish-white edges of the cloud. A moment more, and a timid ray of sunlight gleams in the pools along the road, upon the sheets of fine, perpendicular rain which fell as if through a sieve, and upon the shining, newly washed verdure of the wayside grass.

The black thunder-cloud overspreads the opposite portion of the sky in equally threatening fashion, but I no longer fear it. I experience an inexpressibly joyous feeling of hope in life, which has quickly taken the place of my oppressive sensation of fear. My soul smiles, like Nature, refreshed and enlivened.

Vasily turns down his coat-collar, takes off the apron, and shakes it. I lean out of the britchka, and eagerly drink in the fresh, perfumed air. The shining, well-washed body of the coach, with its cross-bar and trunks, rolls along in front of us ; the backs of the horses, the breeching and reins, the tires of the wheels, all are wet, and glitter in the sun as though covered with lacquer. On one side of the road, a limitless field of winter wheat, intersected here and there by shallow channels, gleams with damp earth and verdure, and spreads in a carpet of varying tints to the very horizon ; on the other side an ash grove, with an undergrowth of nut-bushes, and wild cherry, stands as in an overflow of bliss, quite motionless, and slowly sheds the bright rain-drops from its well-washed branches upon last year's dry leaves. Crested larks flutter about on all sides with joyous song and fall ; in the wet bushes, the uneasy movements of little birds are audible, and the note of the cuckoo is wafted distinctly from the heart of the wood.

The marvellous perfume of the forest is so enchanting after this spring thunder-storm, the scent of the birches, the violets, the dead leaves, the mushrooms, the wild-cherry trees, that I cannot sit still in the britchka, but jump from the step, run to the bushes, and in spite of the shower of rain-drops I tear off branches of the fluttering cherry-trees, switch my face with them, and drink in their wondrous perfume.

Without heeding the fact that great clods of mud adhere to my boots, and that my stockings were wet through long ago, I splash through the mud, at a run, to the window of the coach.

"Liubotchka! Katenka!" I cry, handing in several branches of cherry, "see how beautiful!"

The girls pipe up, and cry, "Ah!" Mimi screams that I am to go away, or I shall infallibly be crushed.

"Smell how sweet it is!" I shout.

CHAPTER III

A NEW VIEW

KATENKA was sitting beside me in the britchka, and, with her pretty head bent, was thoughtfully watching the dusty road as it flew past beneath the wheels. I gazed at her in silence, and wondered at the sad, unchildish expression, which I encountered for the first time on her rosy little face.

"We shall soon be in Moscow now," said I.
"What do you think it is like?"

"I do not know," she answered unwillingly.

"But what do you think? Is it bigger than Serpukhof, or not?"

"What?"

"Oh, nothing."

But through that instinct by means of which one person divines the thoughts of another, and which serves as a guiding-thread in conversation, Katenka understood that her indifference pained me: she raised her head, and turned towards me.

"Your papa has told you that we are to live with grandmamma?"

"Yes, grandmamma insists on our living with her."

"And we are all to live there?"

"Of course: we shall live upstairs in one half of the house; you will live in the other half, and papa will live in the wing; but we shall all dine together downstairs with grandmamma."

"Mamma says that your grandmother is so majestic—and cross."

"No-o! She only seems so at first. She is

majestic, but not at all cross : on the contrary, she is very kind and cheerful. If you had only seen what a ball we had on her name-day ! ”

“ Nevertheless, I am afraid of her ; and besides, God knows if we shall ” —

Katenka stopped suddenly, and again fell into thought.

“ What is it ? ” I asked uneasily.

“ Nothing.”

“ Yes, but you said, ‘ God knows ’ ” —

“ And you said, ‘ What a ball we had at grand-mamma’s.’ ”

“ Yes, it’s a pity that you were not there : there were ever so many guests—forty people, music, generals, and I danced. Katenka ! ” I said all at once, pausing in the middle of my description, ‘ you are not listening.’ ”

“ Yes, I am : you said that you danced.”

“ Why are you so sad ? ”

“ One can’t be gay all the time.”

“ No : you have changed greatly since we returned from Moscow. Tell me truly,” I added, with a look of determination, as I turned towards her, “ why have you grown so strange ? ”

“ Am I strange ? ” replied Katenka, with an animation which showed that my remark interested her. “ I am not at all strange.”

“ You are not as you were formerly,” I went on.

“ It used to be evident that we were one in everything, that you regarded us as relatives, and loved us, just as we did you : and now you have become so serious, you keep apart from us ” —

“ Not at all ! ”

“ No, let me finish,” I interrupted, already beginning to be conscious of a slight tickling in my nose, which preceded the tears that were always rising to my eyes, when I gave utterance to a long-repressed, tender thought. “ You withdraw from us ; you talk only with Mimi, as if you did not want to know us.”

"Well, it's impossible to remain the same always ; one must change some time," replied Katenka, who had a habit of explaining everything by a kind of fatalistic necessity, when she did not know what to say.

I remember that once, after quarrelling with Liubotchka, who had called her a *stupid little girl*, she answered, "Everybody cannot be wise : some people must be stupid." But this reply, that a change was necessary sometimes, did not satisfy me, and I pursued my inquiries :

"Why is it necessary ?"

"Why, we can't live together always," answered Katenka, reddening slightly, and staring steadily at Philip's back. "My mamma could live with your dead mamma, because she was her friend ; but God knows whether she will get along with the countess, who is said to be so cross. Besides, we must part some day, in any case. You are rich, you have Petrovskoe ; but we are poor, my mamma has nothing."

You are rich ; we are poor ! These words, and the ideas connected with them, seemed very strange to me. According to my notions at that period, only beggars and peasants could be poor, and this idea of poverty I could never reconcile in my imagination with pretty, graceful Katya. It seemed to me, that, since Mimi and Katya had once lived with us, they would always do so, and share everything equally. It could not be otherwise. But now a thousand new, undefined thoughts, touching their position, dawned on my brain ; and I was so ashamed that we were rich, that I blushed, and positively could not look Katenka in the face.

"What does it mean ?" I thought, "that we are rich and they are poor ? And how does that entail the necessity of a separation ? Why cannot we share what we have equally ?" But I understood that it was not fitting that I should speak to Katenka about this ; and some practical instinct,

which ran contrary to these logical deductions, already told me that she was right, and that it would be out of place to explain this idea to her.

"Are you actually going to leave us?" I said.
"How shall we live apart?"

"What is to be done? It pains me too; but if this takes place, I know what I shall do."

"You will become an actress! What nonsense!" I broke in, knowing that it had always been one of her cherished dreams to be an actress.

"No: I said that when I was very small."

"What will you do, then?"

"I will go into a monastery, and live there, and go about in a black gown and a velvet hood."

Katenka began to cry.

Has it ever happened to you, reader, to perceive, all at once, at a certain period of your life, that your view of things has entirely changed; as though all the objects which you had seen hitherto had suddenly turned another side to you? This species of moral change took place in me for the first time during our journey, from which epoch I date the beginning of my boyhood.

For the first time a distinct idea entered my head, that not our family alone inhabited this world; that all interests did not revolve about us; and that there exists another life for people who have nothing in common with us, who care nothing for us, who have no idea of our existence even. No doubt, I had known all this before; but I had not known it as I knew it now. I did not acknowledge it or feel it.

A thought often passes into conviction by one familiar path, which is often entirely unexpected and apart from the paths which other souls traverse to arrive at the same conclusion. The conversation with Katenka, which affected me powerfully, and caused me to reflect upon her future position, constituted that path for me. When I looked at the villages and towns which we traversed, in every

house of which lived at least one such family as ours ; at the women and children who gazed after our carriages with momentary curiosity, and vanished for ever from sight ; at the shopkeepers and the peasants, who not only did not salute us as I was accustomed to see them do in Petrovskoe, but did not deign so much as a glance—the question entered my mind for the first time, what could occupy them if they cared nothing for us ? And from this question, others arose : how and by what means do they live ? how do they bring up their children ? do they instruct them, or let them play ? how do they punish them ? and so forth.

CHAPTER IV

IN MOSCOW

ON our arrival in Moscow, the change in my views of things, people, and my own relations to them, became still more sensible. When, at my first meeting with grandmamma, I saw her thin wrinkled face and dim eyes, the feeling of servile reverence and terror which I had entertained for her changed to one of sympathy. It made me uncomfortable to see her sorrow at meeting us. I recognized the fact that we, of ourselves, were nothing in her eyes ; that we were dear to her as memories. I felt that this thought was expressed in every one of the kisses with which she covered my cheeks : " She is dead ; she is gone ; I shall never see her more."

Papa, who had next to nothing to do with us in Moscow, and, with ever-anxious face, came to us only at dinner-time, in a black coat or dress-suit, lost a great deal in my eyes, along with his big flaring collars, his dressing-gown, his stewards, his clerks, and his expeditions of the threshing-floor and hunting. Karl Ivanitch, whom grandmamma called *dyadka*, and who had suddenly taken it into his head, God knows why, to exchange his respectable and familiar baldness for a red wig with a parting almost in the middle of his head, seemed to me so strange and ridiculous, that I wondered how I could have failed to remark it before.

Some invisible barrier also made its appearance between the girls and us. Both they and we had our own secrets. They seemed to take on airs

CHAPTER V

MY ELDER BROTHER

I WAS only a year and some months younger than Volodya: we had grown up, studied and played together always. The distinction of elder and younger was not made between us. But just about the time of which I am speaking I began to comprehend that Volodya was not my comrade in years, inclinations, and qualities. It even seemed to me that Volodya recognized his superiority, and was proud of it. This conviction, possibly a false one, inspired me with self-love, which suffered at every encounter with him. He stood higher than I in everything—in amusements, in studies, in quarrels, in the knowledge of how to conduct himself; and all this removed me to a distance from him, and caused me to experience moral torments which were incomprehensible to me. If, on the first occasion when Volodya put on linen shirts with plaits, I had said plainly that I was vexed at not having the same, I am sure that I should have been more comfortable, and it would not have seemed, every time that he adjusted his collar, that it was done solely in order to hurt my feelings.

What tormented me most of all was, that Volodya understood me, as it seemed to me at times, but tried to hide it.

Who has not remarked those secret, wordless relations which are shown in an imperceptible smile, a motion or a glance, between people who live together constantly, brothers, friends, husband and wife, master and servant, and particularly

when these people are not in every respect frank with each other! How many unuttered desires, thoughts, and fears—of being understood—are expressed in one casual glance when our eyes meet timidly and irresolutely!

But possibly I was deceived on this point by my excessive sensibility, and tendency to analysis; perhaps Volodya did not feel at all as I did. He was impetuous, frank, and inconstant in his impulses. He was carried away by the most diverse objects, and he entered into them with his whole soul.

At one time a passion for pictures took possession of him; he took to drawing himself, spent all his money on it, begged of his drawing-master, of papa and of grandmamma; then it was a passion for articles with which he decorated his table, and he collected them from all parts of the house; then a passion for romances, which he procured on the sly, and read all day and all night. I was involuntarily carried away by his hobbies; but I was too proud to follow in his footsteps, and too young and too little self-dependent to select a new path. But there was nothing which I envied so much as Volodya's happy, frank, and noble character, which was displayed with special clearness in the quarrels which took place between us. I felt that he behaved well, but could not imitate him.

Once, during the greatest fervour of his passion for ornamental articles, I went up to his table, and unintentionally broke an empty variegated little smelling-bottle.

"Who asked you to touch my things?" said Volodya, as he entered the room, and perceived the havoc which I had wrought in the symmetry of the varied ornaments of his table; "and where's that little smelling-bottle? you must have"—

"I dropped it unintentionally: it broke. Where's the harm?"

"Please never to *dare* to touch my things," he

said, putting the bits of the broken bottle together, and regarding them sorrowfully.

"Please *don't give any orders*," I retorted. "I broke it, that's the end of it: what's the use of talking about it?"

And I smiled, although I had not the least desire to smile.

"Yes, it's nothing to you, but it's *something* to me," went on Volodya, making that motion of shrugging his shoulders which he had inherited from papa: "he has broken it, and yet he laughs, this intolerable *little boy*!"

"I am a little boy, but you are big and stupid."

"I don't mean to quarrel with you," said Volodya, giving me a slight push: "go away."

"Don't you push me!"

"Go away!"

"I tell you, don't you push me!"

Volodya took me by the hand, and tried to drag me away from the table; but I was irritated to the highest degree. I seized the table by the leg, and tipped it over. "Take that!" and all the ornaments of porcelain and glass were shattered in pieces on the floor.

"You disgusting little boy!" shrieked Volodya, attempting to uphold the falling ornaments.

"Well, everything is at an end between us now!" I thought, as I quitted the room: "we have quarrelled for ever."

We did not speak to each other until evening: I felt myself in the wrong, was afraid to look at him, and could not occupy myself with anything all day long. Volodya, on the contrary, studied well, and chatted and laughed with the girls after dinner, as usual.

As soon as our teacher had finished his lessons, I left the room. I was too afraid, awkward, and conscience-stricken to remain alone with my brother. After the evening lesson in history, I took my note-book, and started towards the door.

As I passed Volodya, in spite of the fact that I wanted to go up to him, and make peace, I pouted, and tried to put on an angry face. Volodya raised his head just at that moment, and with a barely perceptible, good-naturedly derisive smile, looked boldly at me. Our eyes met, and I knew that he understood me, and also that I understood that he understood me; but an insuperable feeling made me turn away.

"Nikolinka!" he said, in his usual simple and not at all pathetic voice: "you've been angry long enough. Forgive me if I insulted you."

And he gave me his hand.

All at once, something rose higher and higher in my breast, and began to oppress me, and stop my breath; tears came to my eyes, and I felt better.

"For-give me, Vol-dya!" I said, squeezing his hand.

But Volodya looked at me as though he could not at all comprehend why there were tears in my eyes.

CHAPTER VI

MASCHA

BUT not one of the changes which took place in my views of things was so surprising to me myself, as that in consequence of which I ceased to regard one of our maids as a servant of the female sex, and began to regard her as a *woman*, on whom my peace and happiness might, in some degree, depend.

From the time when I can remember anything, I recall Mascha in our house ; and never, until the occasion which altered my view of her completely, and which I will relate presently, did I pay the slightest attention to her. Mascha was twenty-five when I was fourteen ; she was very pretty. But I am afraid to describe her. I fear lest my fancy should again present to me the enchanting and deceitful picture which existed in it during the period of my passion for her. In order to make no mistake, I will merely say, that she was remarkably white, luxuriantly developed, and was a woman ; and I was fourteen years old.

At one of those moments when, with lesson in hand, you busy yourself with a promenade up and down the room, endeavouring to step only on one crack in the floor, or with the singing of some incoherent air, or the smearing of the edge of the table with ink, or the repetition, without the application of any thought, of some phrase—in a word, at one of those moments when the mind refuses to act, and the imagination, assuming the upper hand, seeks an impression,—I stepped out of the school-

room, and went down to the landing, without any object whatever.

Someone in slippers was ascending the next turn of the stairs. Of course I wanted to know who it was; but the sound of the footsteps suddenly ceased, and I heard Mascha's voice:

"Now, what are you playing pranks for? Will it be well when Marya Ivanovna comes?"

"She won't come," said Volodya's voice in a whisper, and then there was some movement, as if Volodya had attempted to detain her.

"Now what are you doing with your hands? you shameless fellow!" and Mascha ran past me with her neckerchief pushed to one side, so that her plump white neck was visible beneath it.

I cannot express the degree of amazement which this discovery caused me; but the feeling of amazement soon gave way to sympathy with Volodya's caper. What surprised me was not his behaviour, but how he had got at the idea that it was pleasant to behave so. And involuntarily I began to want to imitate him.

I sometimes spent whole hours on that landing, without a single thought, listening with strained attention to the slightest movement which proceeded from above; but I never could force myself to imitate Volodya, in spite of the fact that I wanted to do it more than anything else in the world. Sometimes, having concealed myself behind a door, I listened with envy and jealousy to the commotion which arose in the maids' room, and the thought occurred to me, What would be my position if I were to go upstairs, and, like Volodya, try to kiss Mascha? What should I, with my broad nose and flaunting tuft of hair, say when she asked me what I wanted? Sometimes I heard Mascha say to Volodya, "Take that to punish you! Why do you cling to me? Go away, you scamp! Why doesn't Nikolai Petrovitch ever come here and make a fool of himself?" She did not know that

CHAPTER VII

SHOT

“MY God, powder!” screamed Mimi, panting with emotion. “What are you doing? Do you want to burn the house down, and ruin us all?”

And, with an indescribable expression of firmness, Mimi commanded all to retire, walked up to the scattered shot with long and determined strides, and, despising the danger which might result from a premature explosion, she began to stamp it out with her feet. When, in her opinion, the danger was averted, she called Mikhei, and ordered him to fling all that *powder* as far as possible, or, what was better still, into the water; and, proudly smoothing her cap, she betook herself to the drawing-room. “They are well looked after, there’s no denying that,” she grumbled.

When papa came from the wing, and we accompanied him to grandmamma, Mimi was already seated near the window in her room, gazing threateningly at the door with a certain mysteriously official expression. She held something enveloped in paper in her hand. I guessed that it was the shot, and that grandmamma already knew everything.

In grandmamma’s room there were, besides Mimi, Gascha the maid, who, as was evident from her red and angry face, was very much put out; and Dr. Blumenthal, a small, pock-marked man, who was vainly endeavouring to calm Gascha by making mysterious and pacifying signs to her with his eyes and head.

Grandmamma herself was sitting rather sideways, occupied with the game of "patience," in which the "traveller" always indicated an extremely unpropitious frame of mind.

"How do you feel to-day, mamma? have you slept well?" said papa, as he respectfully kissed her hand.

"Very well, my dear; I believe you know that I am always well," replied grandmamma in a tone which seemed to indicate that papa's question was as misplaced and insulting as it could be. "Well, are you going to give me a clean handkerchief?" she continued, turning to Gascha.

"I have given it to you," replied Gascha, pointing to a cambric handkerchief, as white as snow, which lay on the arm of the chair.

"Take away that dirty thing, and give me a clean one, my dear."

Gascha went to the wardrobe, pulled out a drawer, and then slammed it in again with such force that all the glass in the room rattled. Grandmamma glanced round with a threatening look at all of us, and continued to watch the maid's movements attentively. When the latter gave her what appeared to me to be the same handkerchief, grandmamma said:

"When will you grind my snuff, my dear?"

"When there's time, I'll do it."

"What did you say?"

"I'll do it to-day."

"If you don't wish to serve me, my dear, you might have said so; I would have discharged you long ago."

"If you discharge me, I shan't cry," muttered the maid in a low tone.

At that moment the doctor tried to wink at her; but she looked at him with so much anger and decision that he immediately dropped his eyes, and busied himself with his watch-key.

"You see, my dear," said grandmamma,

turning to papa, when Gascha, still muttering, had left the room; "how people speak to me in my own house."

"If you will permit me, mamma, I will grind your snuff," said papa, who was evidently very much embarrassed by this unexpected behaviour.

"No, I thank you; she is impudent because she knows that no one but herself understands how to grind snuff as I like it. You know, my dear," went on grandmamma, after a momentary pause, "that your children came near setting the house on fire to-day?"

Papa gazed at grandmamma with respectful curiosity.

"This is what they play with.—Show him," she said, turning to Mimi.

Papa took the shot in his hand, and could not forbear a smile.

"Why, this is shot, mamma," said he; "it's not at all dangerous."

"I am very much obliged to you, my dear, for teaching me, only I'm too old."

"Nerves! nerves," whispered the doctor.

And papa immediately turned to us.

"Where did you get that? and how dare you play pranks with such things?"

"Don't ask them anything; you must ask their *dyadka*,"* said grandmamma, pronouncing the word *dyadka* with particular contempt, "what he is looking after."

"Voldemar said that Karl Ivanitch himself gave him this *powder*," put in Mimi.

"Now you see what he is good for," continued grandmamma. "And where is he, that *dyadka*, what's his name? Send him here."

"I gave him leave to go out and make a visit," said papa.

"There's no sense in that; he ought to be here all the time. The children are not mine, but yours,

Valet.

and I have no right to advise you, because you are wiser than I," pursued grandmamma; "but it does seem as though it were time to engage a tutor for them, and not a *valet*, a German peasant,—yes, a stupid peasant, who can teach them nothing except bad manners and Tyrolese songs. Is it extremely necessary, now, I ask you, that children should know how to sing Tyrolese songs? However, nobody thinks of this *now*, and you can do as you please."

The word "now" meant that they had no mother, and called up sad memories in grandmamma's heart. She dropped her eyes on her snuff-box, with its portrait, and became thoughtful.

"I have long been meditating that," papa hastened to say, "and I wanted to advise with you, mamma. Shall we not invite St. Jérôme, who is now giving them lessons by the day?"

"You will be doing extremely well, my friend," said grandmamma, and no longer in the dissatisfied tone in which she had spoken before. "St. Jérôme is at least a tutor who knows how children of good family should be trained, and not a paltry *valet*, who is good for nothing but to take them to walk."

"I will speak with him to-morrow," said papa.

And, in fact, two days after this conversation, Karl Ivanitch yielded his place to the young French dandy.

CHAPTER VIII

KARL IVANITCH'S HISTORY

LATE on the evening which preceded the day which Karl Ivanitch was to leave us for ever, he stood beside the bed in his wadded gown and red cap, bending over his trunk, and carefully packing his effects.

Karl Ivanitch's intercourse with us had been peculiarly dry of late. He seemed to avoid all connection with us; so when I now entered the room, he glanced askance at me, and went on with his work. I lay down on my bed, but Karl Ivanitch, who had in former times strictly prohibited this, said nothing to me; and the thought that he would never more scold us or stop us, that he had no concern with us now, reminded me vividly of the approaching separation. I was sorry that he had ceased to love us, and wanted to express this feeling to him. "Let me help you, Karl Ivanitch," I said, going up to him. Karl Ivanitch glanced at me, and again turned aside; but in the fleeting look which he cast at me, I read not the indifference with which he explained his coldness, but genuine, concentrated grief.

"God sees all, and knows all; and may His holy will be done in all things!" he said, drew himself up to his full height, and sighed heavily. "Yes, Nikolinka," he went on, perceiving the expression of unfeigned sympathy with which I regarded him, "it is my fate to be unhappy from my very infancy to my coffin. I have always been repaid with evil for good which I have done

to people ; and my reward is not here, but yonder," he said, pointing toward heaven. " If you only knew my history, and all that I have undergone in this life ! I have been a shoemaker, I have been a soldier, I have been a *deserter*, I have been a workman, I have been a teacher, and now I am nothing ; and, like the Son of God, I have nowhere to lay my head," he concluded, and closing his eyes, he fell into a chair.

Perceiving that Karl Ivanitch was in that sensitive state of mind in which he uttered his dearest thoughts for his own satisfaction, without heeding the hearer, I seated myself on the *béd* in silence, and without removing my eyes from his kind face.

" You are not a child, you can understand. I will tell you my story, and all that I have endured in this life. Some day you will recall the old friend, who loved you very much, children."

Karl Ivanitch leaned his elbow on the table which stood beside him, took a pinch of snuff, and, rolling his eyes heavenward, began his tale in that peculiar, measured, throat voice, in which he usually dictated to us.

" *I was unhappy even before I was born,*"* he said, with great feeling. . . .

As Karl Ivanitch related his history to me more than once afterwards, in exactly the same terms, and always with the same identical intonations, I hope to be able to reproduce it almost word for word, the faults of language, of course, excepted, of which the reader can form his own judgment from the first sentence. Whether it really was his history, or a production of the imagination, which had had its birth during his lonely life in our house, or whether he only coloured the real events of his life with fantastic facts, I have not been able to decide to this day. On the one hand,

* "*Unglück verfolgte mich schon im Schoosse meiner Mutter.*" The Russian is also incorrect.

he related his story with too much of that lively feeling and methodical sequence which constitute the chief proofs of veracity, to permit one to doubt it; on the other hand, there was too much poetic beauty about his history, so that this very beauty evoked doubts.

"In my veins flows the noble blood of the counts of Sommerblatt. I was born six weeks after the marriage. My mother's husband (I called him papa) was a farmer under Count Sommerblatt. He could never forget my mother's shame, and did not love me. I had a little brother, Johann, and two sisters; but I was a stranger in the midst of my own family. When Johann committed any follies, papa used to say, 'I never have a moment's peace with that child Karl!' and then I was scolded and punished. When my sisters got angry with each other, papa said, 'Karl will never be an obedient boy!' and I was scolded and punished.

"My good mamma alone loved me and petted me. She often said to me, 'Karl, come here, to my room,' and then she kissed me on the sly. 'Poor, poor Karl!' she said, 'no one loves you, but I would not change you for anyone. One thing your mamma begs of you,' she said to me: 'study well, and always be an honourable man, and God will not desert you.' And I tried. When I was fourteen, and could go to communion, mamma said to papa, 'Karl is a big boy now, Gustav: what shall we do with him?' And papa said, 'I don't know.' Then mamma said, 'Let us send him to Herr Schultze in the town, and let him be a shoemaker.' And papa said, 'Very good.' Six years and seven months I lived in the town, with the master shoemaker, and the master loved me. He said, 'Karl is a good workman, and he shall soon be my partner.' But man proposes, and God disposes. In 1796 a conscription was appointed, and all who could

CHAPTER IX

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING

“THAT was a terrible time, Nikolinka,” continued Karl Ivanitch. “Napoleon was alive then. He wanted to conquer Germany, and we defended our fatherland to the last drop of blood !

“I was at Ulm, I was at Austerlitz, I was at Wagram.”

“Did you fight, too ?” I asked, gazing at him in amazement. “Did you also kill people ?”

Karl Ivanitch immediately relieved my mind on that score.

“Once a French grenadier lingered behind his comrades, and fell by the way. I ran up with my gun, and was about to transfix him ; but the Frenchman threw away his weapons, and begged for mercy, and I let him go.

“At Wagram, Napoleon chased us to the islands, and surrounded us so that there was no safety anywhere. For three days we had no provisions, and we stood in the water up to our knees.

“The miscreant Napoleon would neither take us nor leave us.

“On the fourth day, thank God, we were taken prisoners, and led off to the fortress. I had on blue trousers, a uniform of good cloth, fifteen thalers in money, and a silver watch, the gift of my papa. A French soldier took all from me. Fortunately, I had three ducats left, which mamma had sewed into my doublet. Nobody found them.

“I did not wish to remain long in the fortress,

and decided to run away. Once on a great festival day, I told the sergeant who looked after us, 'Herr sergeant, this is a solemn festival, and I want to observe it. Please fetch two bottles of Madeira, and we will drink them together.' And the sergeant said, 'Very good.' When the sergeant brought the Madeira, and we had drunk it in a wineglass, turn and turn about, I took him by the hand, and said, 'Herr sergeant, do you happen to have a father and mother?' He said, 'Yes, Herr Mauer.'—'My father and mother,' said I, 'have not seen me for eight years, and do not know whether I am alive or whether my bones are lying in the damp earth. O Herr sergeant! I have two ducats, which were in my doublet: take them and let me go. Be my benefactor, and my mamma will pray to Almighty God for you all her life.'

"The sergeant drank a glass of Madeira, and said, 'Herr Mauer, I love and pity you extremely, but you are a prisoner, and I am a soldier.' I pressed his hand, and said, 'Herr sergeant!'

"And the sergeant said, 'You are a poor man, and I will not take your money; but I will help you. When I go to bed, buy a bucket of brandy for the soldiers, and they will sleep. I will not watch you.'

"He was a good man. I bought the bucket of brandy; and when the soldiers were drunk, I put on my boots and my old cloak, and went out of the door. I went to the wall, with the intention of jumping over; but there was water there, and I would not spoil my last remaining clothes. I went to the gate.

"The sentry was marching up and down with his gun,* and he looked at me. 'Quî vive?' he said for the first time, and I made no answer.

* Karl Ivanitch's language is an extraordinary mixture of bad Russian and German, which it is impossible to reproduce without much tiresome repetition.—TR.

Qui vive ? ' said he the second time, and I made no answer. ' Qui vive ? ' he said for the third time, *and I ran away. I sprang into the water, climbed out on the other side, and took my departure.*

" All night I ran along the road ; but when it began to dawn, I was afraid that they would recognise me, and I hid in the tall rye. Then I knelt, folded my hands, and thanked our heavenly Father for saving me, and fell asleep with a tranquil mind.

" I woke in the evening, and proceeded farther. All at once, a great German wagon with two black horses overtook me. In the wagon sat a handsomely dressed man, who was smoking a pipe, and looking at me. I walked slowly, in order that the wagon might pass me ; but when I went slowly, the wagon went more slowly still, and the man stared at me. I sat down by the roadside ; the man stopped his horses, and looked at me. ' Young man,' said he, ' whither are you going so late ? ' I said, ' I am going to Frankfort.'— ' Get into my wagon ; there's room, and I will take you there. Why have you nothing with you ? why is your beard unshaved ? and why are your clothes muddy ? ' he said to me, when I had seated myself by him. ' I am a poor man,' I said. ' I want to hire out somewhere as a workman ; and my clothes are muddy because I fell down in the road.'— ' You are telling an untruth, young man,' said he : ' the road is dry now.'

" And I remained silent.

" ' Tell me the whole truth,' said the good man to me. ' Who are you, and whence come you ? Your face pleases me, and if you are an honest man I will help you.'

" And I told him all. He said, ' Very good, young man. Come to my rope-factory. I will give you work, clothes, and money, and you shall live with me.'

" And I said, ' Very well.'

"We went to the rope-factory, and the good man said to his wife, 'Here is a young man who has fought for his country, and escaped from captivity; he has neither home, clothes, nor bread. He will live with me. Give him some clean linen, and feed him.'

"I lived at the rope-factory for a year and a half, and my master became so fond of me that he would not let me go. I was a handsome man then; I was young, tall, with blue eyes, and a Roman nose; and Madame L. (I cannot tell her name), the wife of my master, was a young and pretty woman, and she fell in love with me.

"When she saw me, she said, 'Herr Mauer, what does your mamma call you?' I said, 'Karlehen.'

"And she said, 'Karlchen, sit here beside me.'

"I seated myself beside her, and she said, 'Karlchen, kiss me!'"

"I kissed her, and she said, 'Karlchen, I love you so, that I cannot endure it any longer,' and she trembled all over."

Here Karl Ivanitch made a prolonged pause; and rolling up his kind blue eyes, he rocked his head, and began to smile, as people do when under the influence of pleasant recollections.

"Yes," he began again, settling himself in his arm-chair, and folding his dressing-gown about him, "I have been through a great deal, both good and bad, in my life; but He is my witness," he said, pointing to a figure of the Saviour, worked on canvas, which hung over his bed, "nobody can say that Karl Ivanitch has been a dishonorable man! I would not repay the kindness which Herr L. had shown me, by black ingratitude; and I resolved to run away from him. In the evening, when all had gone to bed, I wrote a letter to my master, laid it on the table in my room, took my clothes and three thalers in money, and stepped quietly out into the street. No one saw me, and I walked along the road."

CHAPTER X

CONTINUATION

“ I HAD not seen my mamma for nine years ; and I did not know whether she was alive, or whether her bones were already lying in the damp earth. I returned to my fatherland. When I reached the town, I inquired where Gustav Mauer lived, who had been farmer to Count Sommerblatt ; and they told me, ‘ Count Sommerblatt is dead ; and Gustav Mauer lives in the high street, and keeps a liquor shop.’ I put on my new vest, a handsome coat (a gift of the manufacturer), brushed my hair well, and went to my papa’s liquor-shop. My sister, Mariechen, was sitting in the shop, and inquired what I wanted. I said, ‘ May I drink a glass of liquor ? ’ and she said ‘ Father, a young man is asking for a glass of liquor.’ And papa said, ‘ Give the young man a glass of liquor.’ I sat down at the table, drank my glass of liquor, smoked my pipe, and looked at papa, Mariechen, and Johann, who had also entered the shop. During the conversation, papa said to me, ‘ You probably know, young man, where our army stands now ? ’ I said, ‘ I have come from the army myself, and it is near Vienna.’ — ‘ Our son,’ said papa, ‘ was a soldier, and it is nine years since he has written to us, and we do not know whether he is alive or dead. My wife is always weeping for him.’ I smoked away at my pipe, and said, ‘ What was your son’s name, and where did he serve ? Perhaps I know him.’ — ‘ He was called Karl Mauer, and he served in the

Austrian *Jagers*,' said papa. 'He was a tall, handsome man, like you,' said sister Mariechen.

" 'I know your Karl,' said I. 'Amalia!' cried my father suddenly, 'come here! here is a young man who knows our Karl.' *And my dear mamma comes through the rear door. I immediately recognise her. 'You know our Karl?' she said, looked at me, turned very pale, and began to tremble!* 'Yes, I have seen him,' said I, and did not dare to lift my eyes to her; my heart wanted to *leap*. 'My Karl is alive!' said mamma, 'thank God! Where is he, my dear Karl? I should die in peace if I could see him once more, my beloved son; but it is not God's will,' and she began to cry. *I could not bear it. 'Mamma,'* said I, 'I am your Karl,' *and she fell into my arms.'*"

Karl Ivanitch closed his eyes, and his lips trembled.

" 'Mother,' said I, 'I am your son; I am your Karl,' and she fell into my arms, he repeated, becoming somewhat calmer, as he wiped away the big tears which trickled down his cheeks.

"But it was not God's pleasure that I should end my days in my own country. I was destined to ill luck. Misfortune followed me everywhere. I lived in my native land only three months. One Sunday I was in a coffee-house buying a jug of beer, smoking my pipe, and talking politics with my acquaintances, and about the Emperor Franz, about Napoleon and the war, and each one was expressing his opinion. Near us sat a strange gentleman, in a grey overcoat, who drank his coffee, smoked his pipe, and said nothing to us. When the night watchman cried ten o'clock, I took my hat, paid my reckoning, and went home. About midnight someone knocked at the door. I woke up and said, 'Who's there?'—'Open!' I said, 'Tell me who you are, and I will open.'—'Open in the name of the law!' came the answer from outside the door, and I

opened. Two soldiers with guns stood at the door ; and the strange man in the grey overcoat, who had been sitting near us in the coffee-house, entered. He was a spy. 'Come with me,' said the spy. 'Very good,' said I. I put on my boots and trousers, fastened my braces, and walked about the room. I was raging at heart. I said, 'He is a villain.' When I reached the wall where my sword hung, I suddenly seized it, and said, '*You are a spy : defend yourself !*' I gave him a cut on the right, a cut on the left, *and one on the head. The spy fell !* I seized my portmanteau and my money, and leaped out of the window. I got to Ems ; there I made the acquaintance of General Sazin. He took a fancy to me, got a passport from the ambassador, and took me to Russia with him to teach his children. When General Sazin died, your mamma called me to her. 'Karl Ivanitch,' she said, 'I give my children into your charge : love them, and I will never discharge you ; I will make your old age comfortable.' Now she is dead, and all is forgotten. After twenty years of service I must now go out into the street, in my old age, to seek a crust of dry bread. *God sees it and knows it, and His holy will be done : only I am sorry for you, children !*' said Karl Ivanitch in conclusion, drawing me to him by the hand, and kissing me on the head.

CHAPTER XI

ONE

BY the conclusion of the year of mourning, grandmamma had somewhat recovered from the grief which had prostrated her, and began to receive guests now and then, especially children, boys and girls of our own age.

On Liubotchka's birthday, the 13th of December, Princess Kornakova and her daughters, Madame Valakhina and Sonitchka, Ilinka Grap, and the two younger Ivin brothers, arrived before dinner.

The sounds of conversation, laughter, and running about ascended to us from below, where all this company was assembled; but we could not join them until our morning lessons were finished. On the calendar which was suspended in the schoolroom was inscribed: "Monday, from 2 to 3, teacher of history and geography;" and it was that master of history whom we were obliged to wait for, listen to, and get rid of, before we should be free. It was twenty minutes past two, but nothing had yet been heard of the teacher of history; he was not even to be seen in the street which he must traverse, and which I was inspecting with a strong desire of never beholding him.

"Lebedeff does not appear to be coming to-day," said Volodya, tearing himself for a moment from Smaragdoff's book, in which he was preparing his lesson.

"God grant, God grant he may not! but I know nothing. But he seems to be coming yonder," I added in a sorrowful voice.

Volodya rose, and came to the window.

"No, that is not he; it is some *gentleman*," said he. "Let's wait until half-past two," he added, stretching himself and scratching his head, as he was in the habit of doing in moments of respite from work; "if he has not come by half-past two, then we can tell St. Jérôme to take away the note-books."

"I don't see what he wants to co-o-o-me for," I said, stretching also, and shaking Kaidanoff's book, which I held in both hands, above my head.

For lack of something to do, I opened the book at the place where our lesson was appointed, and began to read. The lesson was long and difficult. I knew nothing about it, and I perceived that I should not succeed in remembering anything about it, the more so as I was in that state of nervous excitement in which one's thoughts refuse to concentrate themselves on any subject whatever.

After the last history lesson, which always seemed to be the very stupidest, on the most wearisome of all subjects, Lebedeff had complained to St. Jérôme about me; and two marks were placed against me in the books, which was considered bad. St. Jérôme told me then, that, if I got less than three at the next lesson, I should be severely punished. Now this next lesson was imminent, and I confess that I felt very much of a coward.

I was so carried away with the perusal of the lesson which I did not know, that the sound of goloshes being removed in the ante-room startled me all at once. I had hardly had time to cast a glance in that direction, when the pock-marked face which was so antipathetic to me, and the awkward, far too well-known figure of the teacher, in its blue coat closely fastened with learned buttons, made their appearance in the doorway.

The teacher slowly deposited his hat by the window, his note-book on the table, pulled aside

the tails of his swallow-tailed coat (as though it were very important), and seated himself, panting, in his place.

"Now, gentlemen," said he, rubbing one perspiring hand over the other: "let us first review what was said at the last lesson, and then I will endeavour to acquaint you with succeeding events of the Middle Ages."

That meant: Say your lesson.

At the moment when Volodya was answering him with the freedom and confidence peculiar to a person who is thoroughly acquainted with his subject, I went out on the stairs, without any object whatever; and, since it was impossible for me to go down, it was very natural that I should find myself, quite unexpectedly to myself, on the landing. But just as I was about to install myself in my customary post of observation, behind a door, Mimi, who had always been the cause of my misfortunes, suddenly ran against me. "You here?" said she, looking threateningly at me, then at the door of the maids' room, and then at me again.

I felt thoroughly guilty, both because I was not in the schoolroom, and because I was in a place where I had no business to be. So I held my tongue, and, hanging my head, exhibited in my person the most touching expression of penitence. "Well, who ever saw the like!" said Mimi. "What have you been doing here?" I remained silent. "No, things shall not be left in this state," she repeated, rapping her knuckles against the stair-railings: "I shall tell the Countess all about it."

It was already five minutes to three, when I returned to the schoolroom. The teacher was explaining the following lesson to Volodya, as though he had remarked neither my absence nor my presence. When he had finished his exposition, he began to put his note-books together, and Volodya went into the other room to fetch the

lesson-ticket ; and the cheering thought occurred to me, that all was over, and that I had been forgotten.

But all at once the teacher turned to me with a malicious half-smile.

" I hope you have learned your lesson, sir," he said, rubbing his hands.

" I have learned it, sir," I answered.

" Try to tell me something about St. Louis's crusade," said he, shifting about in his chair, and gazing thoughtfully at his feet. " You may tell me first the causes which induced the French king to take the cross," said he, raising his brows, and pointing his finger at the ink-bottle. " Then you may explain to me the general and characteristic traits of that expedition," he added, making a movement with his wrist, as though endeavouring to catch something. " And, finally, the influence of this crusade upon European sovereignty in general," said he, striking the left side of the table with his note-books. " And upon the French monarchy in particular," he concluded, striking the right side of the table, and inclining his head to the right.

I gulped down my spittle a few times, coughed, bent my head on one side, and remained silent. Then seizing a pen, which lay upon the table, I began to pluck it to pieces, still maintaining my silence.

" Permit me to take that pen," said the teacher, extending his hand ; " it is good for something. Now, sir ! "

" Lou—King—St. Louis—was—was — was — a good and wise emperor."

" What, sir ? "

" An emperor. He conceived the idea of going to Jerusalem, and *transferred the reins of government* to his mother."

" What was her name ? "

" B—B—lanka."

"What, sir? Bulanka?"*

I laughed rather awkwardly, and with constraint.

"Well, sir, do you know anything else?" he said sarcastically.

There was nothing for me to lose, so I coughed, and began to utter whatever lies came into my head. The teacher, who sat silently flicking the dust from the table, with the quill pen which he had taken away from me, gazed straight past my ear, and repeated, "Good, very good, sir." I was conscious that I knew nothing, that I was not expressing myself at all as I should; and it pained me frightfully to see that the teacher did not stop me, or correct me.

"Why did he conceive the idea of going to Jerusalem?" said he, repeating my words.

"Because—for the reason—for the purpose, because"—I stopped short, uttered not another word, and felt that if that villainous teacher were to hold his tongue for a whole year, and gaze inquiringly at me, I should not be in a condition to emit another sound. The teacher stared at me for three minutes; then an expression of deep sorrow appeared on his face, and he said to Volodya, who had just entered the room, in a feeling tone:

"Please hand me the record-book."

Volodya gave him the book, and carefully laid the ticket beside it.

The teacher opened the book, and, cautiously dipping his pen, he put down five, in his beautiful hand, for Volodya, under the head of recitations and behaviour. Then he stopped his pen over the column in which my delinquencies were inscribed, looked at me, flitted off the ink, and pondered.

All at once his hand made an almost imperceptible movement, and there appeared a handsomely shaped one and a period; another movement, and in the conduct column stood another one and a dot.

Carefully closing the record-book, the teacher

* Name for a cream-colored horse.

CHAPTER XII

THE LITTLE KEY

WE had hardly got downstairs and exchanged salutations with all the guests, when we were summoned to the table. Papa was very gay (he was winning money just then), presented Liubotchka with a handsome silver service, and, after dinner, remembered that he had also a bonbon box in his wing for the birthday girl.

"There's no use in sending a man; better go yourself, Kolo," he said to me. "The keys are lying on the large table, in the shell, you know. Take them, and, with the very largest key, open the second drawer on the right. There you will find the box and some bonbons in a paper; and you are to bring them all here."

"And shall I bring you some cigars?" I asked, knowing that he always sent for them after dinner.

"Bring them, but see that you don't touch anything in my rooms," he called after me.

I found the keys in the place designated, and was about to open the drawer, when I was stopped by a desire to know what a very small key, which hung on the same bunch, opened.

On the table, amid a thousand varied objects, and near the railing, lay an embroidered portfolio, with a padlock; and I took a fancy to try whether the little key would fit it. My experiment was crowned with complete success; the portfolio opened, and in it I found a whole heap of papers. A feeling of curiosity counselled me with such conviction to find out what those papers were, that I did not

succeed in hearkening to the voice of conscience, and set to work to examine what was in the portfolio.

The childish sentiment of unquestioning respect towards all my elders, and especially towards papa, was so strong within me, that my mind involuntarily refused to draw any conclusions whatever from what I saw. I felt that papa must live in a totally different sphere, which was very beautiful, unattainable, and incomprehensible to me, and that to attempt to penetrate the secrets of his life, would be something in the nature of sacrilege on my part.

Therefore the discovery which I had almost unconsciously made in papa's portfolio, left in me no clear conception, except a dim knowledge that I had behaved badly. I was ashamed and uncomfortable.

Under the influence of this feeling, I desired to close the portfolio as speedily as possible, but I was evidently fated to endure every possible kind of misfortune upon that memorable day. Placing the key in the keyhole of the padlock, I turned it the other way ; supposing that the lock was closed, I pulled out the key, and—oh, horror ! the head of the key only remained in my hand. In vain did I endeavour to unite it with the half in the lock, and release it by means of some magic, I was forced at length to accustom myself to the frightful thought, that I had committed a fresh crime, which must be discovered this very day, when papa returned to his study.

Mimi's complaint, the one mark, and that little key ! Nothing worse could have happened. Grandmamma on account of Mimi's complaint, St. Jérôme about the one mark, papa about that key ; and all these would overwhelm me, and not later than that very evening.

“What will become of me ? Oh, what have I

done ? " I said aloud, as I paced the soft carpet of the study. " Eh," I said to myself, as I got the bonbons and cigars, "*what will be, will be,*" and I ran into the house.

This fatalistic adage, which I had heard from Nikolai in my childhood, produced a beneficial and temporarily soothing effect upon me at all difficult crises in my life. When I entered the hall, I was in a somewhat excited and unnatural but extremely merry mood.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAITRESS

AFTER dinner, games began, and I took the most lively interest in them. While playing at *cat and mouse*,* I awkwardly ran against the Kornakoffs' *governess*, who was playing with us, stepped on her dress unintentionally, and tore it. Perceiving that it afforded all the girls, and Sonitchka in particular, great satisfaction to see the *governess* retire with a perturbed countenance, to the maids' room, to mend her dress, I resolved to procure them that pleasure once more. In consequence of this amiable intention, the *governess* had no sooner returned to the room, than I began to gallop round her, and I kept up this evolution until I found a favourable opportunity to catch my heel once more in her skirt, and tear it. Sonitchka and the Princess could hardly restrain their laughter, which flattered my vanity very agreeably; but St. Jérôme, who must have been observing my pranks, came up to me, and said with a frown (which I could not endure) that I evidently was not merry in a good way, and that if I were not more discreet he would make me repent of it, even though it was a festive day.

But I was in the state of excitement of a man who has gambled away more than he has in his pocket, and who fears to reckon up his accounts, and continues to bet on desperate cards without any hope of redeeming himself, and only for the purpose of not giving himself time to think. I smiled impudently, and walked away from him.

Puss in the corner.

After the game of "cat and mouse," someone started a game which we called *Long Nose*. The play consisted in placing two rows of chairs opposite each other ; then the ladies and gentlemen divided into two parties, each choosing another in turn.

The youngest Princess chose the smallest boy every time ; Katenka chose either Volodya or Ilinka ; Sonitchka took Serozha every time, and was not at all abashed, to my extreme amazement, when Serozha went and seated himself directly opposite her. She laughed with her pretty, ringing laugh, and made him a sign with her head, to show that she understood. I comprehended, to the great injury of my vanity, that I was superfluous, *left out* ; that they must say of me every time, "*Who remains yet? Yes, Nikolinka : well, we'll take him.*"

When, therefore, it came my turn to step forward, I went boldly up either to my sister or to one of the ugly Princesses, and, unfortunately, never made a mistake. And Sonitchka seemed so absorbed in Serozha Ivin, that I did not exist for her. I do not know on what grounds I mentally called her a *traitress*, since she had never given me a promise to choose me, and not Serozha ; but I was firmly convinced that she had behaved in the most revolting manner.

After the game I noticed that the *traitress*, whom I despised, but from whom, nevertheless, I could not take my eyes, had retired into a corner with Serozha and Katenka, where they were discussing something in a mysterious manner. Creeping up behind the piano, in order to discover their secret, I saw this : Katenka was holding a cambric handkerchief by two of its corners, thus forming a screen between Sonitchka's head and Serozha's. "No, you have lost ; now you shall pay !" said Serozha. Sonitchka stood before him, with her arms hanging beside her, as if guilty, and said, blushing, "No, I have not lost ; have I, Mlle. Catherine ?"—"I

love the truth," replied Katenka; "you have lost your bet, my dear."

Katenka had hardly uttered these words, when Serqzha bent over, and kissed Sonitchka. He kissed her full upon her rosy lips. And Sonitchka laughed, as though that were nothing, as though it were very amusing. *Horrible!!! Oh the sly traitress!*

CHAPTER XIV

THE ECLIPSE

I SUDDENLY felt a contempt for the entire female sex in general, and for Sonitchka in particular ; I began to assure myself, that there was nothing jolly about these games, that they were only fit for *little girls* ; and I felt very much inclined to create an uproar, to do some manly deed, which would astonish them all. An occasion was not long in presenting itself.

St. Jérôme, after talking of something with Mimi, left the room ; at first, his footsteps were audible on the stairs, and then above us, in the direction of the schoolroom. The thought occurred to me, that Mimi had told him where she had seen me during lesson hours, and that he had gone to inspect the journal. At that time, I did not attribute to St. Jérôme any other object in life than a desire to punish me. I had read somewhere, that children from twelve to fourteen years of age, that is to say, those who are in the transition stage of boyhood, are particularly inclined to arson and murder. In recalling my boyhood, and especially the frame of mind in which I was on that unlucky day, I very clearly appreciate the importance of the most frightful crime, committed without object or intent to injure, but from curiosity, to meet an unconscious need for activity. There are moments when the future presents itself to a man in such sombre colors, that he dreads to fix his mental gaze upon it, entirely represses the action of his mind, and endeavours to convince himself that the

future will not be, and that the past has not been. At such moments, when thought does not sit in judgment before every decision of the will, and the fleshly instincts remain the sole spring of life, I can understand how a child is especially inclined, by reason of his inexperience, to set and light a fire under the very house in which his brothers, his father and his mother, whom he tenderly loves, are sleeping, without the slightest hesitation or fear, and with a smile of curiosity. Under the influence of this temporary absence of reflection, approaching aberration of mind, a peasant lad of seventeen, contemplating the freshly sharpened edge of an axe, beside the bench on which sleeps his aged father, face downward, suddenly flourishes the axe, and gazes with stupid curiosity at the blood, as it drips from the severed neck on the bench ; under the influence of the same absence of reflection, and instinctive curiosity, a man experiences a certain enjoyment in pausing upon the brink of a precipice, and thinking, "What if I should throw myself down there ?" Or, placing a loaded pistol to his forehead, he thinks, "What if I pull the trigger ?" Or he gazes upon some person for whom society universally cherishes a peculiar respect, and thinks, "What if I were to go up to him, take him by the nose, and say, 'Come, my dear fellow, shall we go ?'"

Under the influence of this internal excitement, and absence of reflection, when St. Jérôme came downstairs, and told me that I had no right to be there that evening, because I had behaved badly and studied badly, and that I was to go upstairs at once, I stuck out my tongue at him, and said that I would not leave that spot.

For a moment, St. Jérôme could not utter a word for surprise and anger.

"Very well," he said, following me : "I have promised to punish you several times already, and your grandmamma has wanted to beg you off ; but

now I see that nothing but the rod will make you mind, and you have fully deserved it to-day."

He said this so loudly that everyone heard his words. The blood retreated to my heart with unusual force. I felt that it was beating violently, that the color fled from my face, and that my lips trembled quite involuntarily. I must have looked terrible at that moment, for St. Jérôme, avoiding my glance, walked quickly up to me, and seized me by the hand ; but I no sooner felt the touch of his hand, than, beside myself with rage, I tore my hand away, and struck him with all my childish strength.

"What is the matter with you ? " said Volodya, who had seen my act with horror and amazement, as he approached me.

"Let me alone ! " I shrieked at him through my tears : " not one of you loves me, nor understands how unhappy I am. You are all hateful, disgusting," I added, turning to the whole company in a sort of fury.

But this time St. Jérôme came up to me with a pale, determined face, and before I had time to prepare for defence, he grasped both my hands as in a vice, with a powerful movement, and dragged me away. My head was whirling with excitement. I only remember that I fought desperately with head and knees as long as I had any strength left. I remember that my nose came in contact several times with someone's hips, and that someone's coat fell into my mouth, that I was conscious of the presence of someone's feet all around me, and of the smell of dust, and of the violet with which St. Jérôme perfumed himself.

Five minutes later, the garret door closed behind me.

"Basil ! " said *he* in a revolting, triumphant voice : " bring the rods."

CHAPTER XV

FANCIES

COULD I at that time suppose that I should remain alive after all the misfortunes which came upon me, and that the day would come when I should recall them with composure ?

When I remembered what I had done, I could not imagine what would become of me, but I dimly comprehended that I was irretrievably ruined.

At first, absolute silence reigned below and around me, or so it seemed to me at least, because of my excessively powerful inward agitation ; but gradually I began to distinguish the different sounds. Vasili came downstairs, and, flinging something which resembled a broom on the window ledge, lay down on the chest with a yawn. Below, August Antonitch's huge voice was audible (he must have been speaking of me), then childish voices, then laughter and running ; and then a few minutes later everything in the house had again relapsed into its former movement, as though no one knew or thought of me sitting in the dark garret.

I did not cry, but something as heavy as a stone lay upon my heart. Thoughts and visions passed with redoubled swiftness before my disturbed imagination ; but the memory of the misfortune which had overtaken me incessantly broke their wondrous chain, and I again traversed an endless labyrinth of uncertainty as to the fate which awaited me, of terror and despair.

Then it occurs to me, that there must exist some cause for the general dislike and even hatred of me.

(At that time I was firmly convinced that everybody, beginning with grandmamma and down to Philip, the coachman, hated me, and found pleasure in my sufferings.)

It must be that I am not the son of my father and mother, not Volodya's brother, but an unhappy orphan, a foundling, adopted out of charity, I say to myself; and this absurd idea not only affords me a certain melancholy comfort, but even appears extremely probable. It pleases me to think that I am unhappy not because I am myself to blame, but because such has been my fate since my birth, and that my lot is similar to that of the unfortunate Karl Ivanitch.

"But why conceal this secret any longer, when I have myself succeeded in penetrating it?" I say to myself. "To-morrow I will go to papa, and say to him, 'Papa, in vain do you conceal from me the secret of my birth: I know it.' He will say, 'What is to be done, my friend? Sooner or later you would have learned it. You are not my son; but I have adopted you, and if you will prove worthy of my love, I will never desert you.' And I shall say to him, 'Papa, although I have no right to call you by that name, I now utter it for the last time. I have always loved you, and I shall always love you, and I shall never forget that you are my benefactor; but I can no longer remain in your house. No one here loves me, and St. Jérôme has sworn my ruin. Either he or I must leave your house, because I cannot answer for myself. I hate that man to such a degree that I am prepared for anything. I would kill him as readily as I say: 'Papa, I will kill him.' Papa will begin to beseech me; but I shall wave my hand, and say, 'No, my friend, my benefactor, we cannot live together; but release me.' And then I will embrace him, and say in French, 'O my father! O my benefactor! give me thy blessing for the last time, and may God's will be done.' " And as I sit on the chest in the dark storeroom, I weep

and cry at the thought. But all at once I remember the shameful punishment which is awaiting me ; reality presents itself to me in its true light, and my fancies momentarily take flight.

Then I fancy myself already at liberty, outside our house. I enter the hussars, and go to the war. Enemies bear down upon me from all sides ; I wave my sword, and kill one ; a second wave, I slay another, and a third. Finally, exhausted by wounds and fatigue, I fall to the earth, and shout " Victory ! " The general approaches, and asks, " Where is he, our saviour ? " They point me out to him ; he flings himself on my neck, and shouts, with tears of joy, " Victory ! " I recover, and with an arm bandaged in a black handkerchief I promenade the Tversky boulevard. I am a general ! But, lo, the *Emperor* meets me, and inquires, " Who is this wounded young man ? " He is told that it is the renowned hero Nikolai. The Emperor comes up to me, and says, " I thank you. I will do anything you ask of me." I salute respectfully, and leaning on my sword I say, " I am happy, great Emperor, to have been able to shed my blood for my fatherland, and I wish to die for it ; but if you will be so gracious, then permit me to beg one thing of you—permit me to annihilate my enemy, the foreigner, St. Jérôme. I want to annihilate my enemy, St. Jérôme." I halt threateningly before St. Jérôme, and say to him, " You have caused my misfortune. On your knees ! " But suddenly the thought occurs to me, that the real St. Jérôme may enter at any moment with the rods ; and again I see myself, not a general serving his country, but a very pitiful, weeping creature.

The thought of God comes to me, and I ask Him impudently why He is punishing me. " I never have forgotten my prayers morning and evening ; then why do I suffer ? " I can assert conclusively that the first step towards the religious doubts.

which troubled me during my boyhood was taken then, not because unhappiness excited my murmuring and unbelief, but because the thought of the injustice of Providence, which entered my mind in that time of spiritual disorder and solitude of twenty-four hours' duration, began speedily to grow and to send forth roots, like a pernicious seed which has fallen upon the soft earth after a rain. Then I imagined that I should certainly die, and represented vividly to myself St. Jérôme's amazement when he should find a lifeless body in the garret, instead of me. Recalling Natalya Savischna's tales of how the soul of a dead person does not quit the house for forty days, I penetrate, in thought, unseen, all the rooms of grandmamma's house, and listen to Liubotchka's sincere fears, to grandmamma's grief, and papa's conversation with August Antonitch. "He was a fine boy," says papa, with tears in his eyes. "Yes," says St. Jérôme, "but a great scamp." "You should respect the dead," says papa. "You were the cause of his death; you frightened him; he could not endure the humiliation which you were preparing for him. Away from here, you villain!"

And St. Jérôme falls on his knees, and weeps, and sues for pardon. At the end of the forty days, my soul flies to heaven; there I behold something wonderfully beautiful, white, transparent, and long, and I feel that it is my mother. This white something surrounds me, caresses me; but I feel an uneasiness, as though I did not know her. "If it really is you," I say, "then show yourself to me more distinctly, that I may embrace you." And her voice answers me, "We are all so, here. I cannot embrace you any better. Do you not think it well thus?"—"Yes, I think it is very well; but you cannot tickle me, and I cannot kiss your hands."—"That is not necessary; it is so very beautiful here," she says, and I feel that it really is very beautiful, and we soar away together, higher and

ever higher. Then I suddenly seem to wake, and find myself again on the chest in the dark garret, my cheeks wet with tears, without a single thought, repeating the words, "*And we soar higher and ever higher.*" For a long time, I exert all my power to explain my situation; but only one fearfully gloomy, impenetrable perspective offers itself to my mental gaze at the present moment. I endeavour to return once more to those cheering, blissful dreams, which destroyed consciousness of reality; but to my amazement, no sooner do I enter upon the traces of my former reveries, than I see that a prolongation of them is impossible, and, what is still more surprising, that it no longer affords me any pleasure.

CHAPTER XVI

GRIND LONG ENOUGH, AND THE MEAL WILL COME

I SPENT the night in the garret, and no one came near me; it was only on the following day, that is to say, on Sunday, that I was taken to a little room adjoining the schoolroom, and again locked up. I began to hope that my punishment would be confined to imprisonment; and my thoughts, under the influence of sweet, refreshing slumber, of the bright sunlight playing upon the frost-patterns on the windows, and the customary noises of the day in the streets, began to grow composed. Nevertheless, my solitude was very oppressive: I wanted to move about, to tell somebody all that was seething in my soul, and there was not a living being near me. This position of affairs was all the more disagreeable, because, however repulsive it was to me, I could not avoid hearing St. Jérôme whistling various gay airs with perfect tranquillity, as he walked about his room. I was fully persuaded that he did not want to whistle at all, but that he did it solely for the sake of tormenting me.

At two o'clock, St. Jérôme and Volodya went downstairs; but Nikolai brought my dinner, and when I spoke to him about what I had done, and what awaited me, he said:

"Eh, sir! don't grieve; grind long enough, and the meal will come."*

This adage, which, later on, more than once

* Equivalent to various English proverbs which inculcate patience.

sustained my firmness of spirit, comforted me somewhat ; but the very fact that they had not sent me bread and water alone, but a complete dinner, including tart even, caused me to meditate profoundly. If they had not sent me any tart, then it would have signified that I was to be punished by imprisonment ; but now it turned out that I had not been punished yet, that I was only isolated from others as a pernicious person, and that chastisement was still before me. While I was busy with the solution of this question, the key turned in the lock of my prison, and St. Jérôme entered the room, with a stern, official countenance.

"Come to your grandmother," he said, without looking at me.

I wanted to clean the cuffs of my jacket, which were smeared with chalk, before leaving the room ; but St. Jérôme told me that this was quite unnecessary, as though I was already in such a pitiful moral condition that it was not worth while to trouble myself about my external appearance.

Katenka, Liubotchka, and Volodya stared at me, as St. Jérôme led me through the hall by the hand, with exactly the same expression with which we generally gaze upon the prisoners who are led past our windows every week. But when I approached grandmamma's chair with the intention of kissing her hand, she turned away from me, and hid her hand beneath her mantilla.

"Well, my dear," she said, after a tolerably long silence, during which she surveyed me from head to foot with such a look that I did not know what to do with my eyes and hands, "I must say that you prize my love, and afford me true pleasure. M. St. Jérôme, who at my request," she added, pausing on each word, "undertook your education, does not wish now to remain in my house any longer. Why? Because of you, my dear. I did hope that you would be grateful," she continued after a short silence, and in a tone which showed

that her speech had been prepared beforehand, "for his care and labor, that you would understand how to value his services; but you, a simpleton, a little boy, have brought yourself to raise your hand against him. Very good! Extremely fine! I, also, begin to think that you are incapable of appreciating gentle treatment, that other and more degraded means are required for you. Ask his pardon this instant," she added in a tone of stern command, pointing to St. Jérôme: "do you hear?"

I glanced in the direction indicated by grandmamma's hand, and, catching sight of St. Jérôme's coat, turned away, and did not stir from the spot; and again I began to feel that sinking at my heart.

"What? Don't you hear what I say to you?"

I trembled all over, but did not move.

"Koko!" said grandmamma, who must have perceived the inward agony which I was suffering.

"Koko!" she said in a tender, rather than a commanding, voice, "is this you?"

"Grandmamma, I will not beg his pardon, because"—said I, pausing suddenly, for I felt that I should not be able to restrain the tears which were suffocating me if I uttered a single more word.

"I command you, I beseech you. What is the matter with you?"

"I—I—won't—I can't," I said; and the stifled sobs which had collected in my breast suddenly cast down the barriers which restrained them, and dissolved in a flood of despair.

"In this the way you obey your second mother? is this the way you repay her kindness?" said St. Jérôme in a tragic voice. "On your knees!"

"My God, if she could have seen this!" said grandmamma, turning away from me, and wiping her tears which began to make their appearance. "If she could have seen—All is for the best. Yes, she could not have borne this sorrow, she could not have borne it."

And grandmamma wept more and more violently.

I wept also, but I never thought of begging pardon.

"Calm yourself, in the name of heaven, Madame la Comtesse," said St. Jérôme.

But grandmamma no longer heard him; she covered her face with her hands, and her sobs speedily turned into hiccoughs and hysterics. Mimi and Gascha rushed into the room with frightened faces, and made her smell of some spirits, and a running and whispering speedily arose all over the room.

"Admire your work," said St. Jérôme, leading me upstairs.

"My God, what have I done? What a frightful criminal I am!"

As soon as St. Jérôme had gone downstairs again, after ordering me to go to my room, I ran to the great staircase leading to the street, without giving myself any reason for what I was about.

I do not remember whether I meant to run away, or to drown myself: I only know, that covering my face with my hands, in order that I might not see anyone, I ran farther and farther down those stairs.

"Where are you going?" a familiar voice inquired all at once. "I want you, too, my dear."

I tried to run past; but papa caught me by the hand, and said sternly:

"Come with me, my good fellow! How dared you touch the portfolio in my study?" said he, leading me after him into the little boudoir. "Eh! Why are you silent? Hey?" he added, taking me by the ear.

"Forgive me," I said: "I don't know what possessed me."

"Ah, you don't know what possessed you! you don't know! you don't know! you don't know!" he repeated, and gave my ear a pull at each word. "Will you poke your nose where you have no business in future? will you? will you?"

Although my ear pained me very much, I did not cry; but I experienced a pleasant moral feeling. No sooner had papa released my ear, than I seized his hand, and began to cover it with tears and kisses.

"Whip me," said I through my tears. "Whip me hard, painfully; I am good for nothing; I am a wretch; I am a miserable being."

"What's the matter with you?" he said, slightly repulsing me.

"No, I won't go away on any account," I said, clinging to his coat. "Everybody hates me, I know that; but for God's sake, listen to me, protect me, or turn me out of the house. I cannot live with him; *he* tries in every way to humiliate me. He makes me go on my knees before him. He wants to thrash me. I won't have it; I am not a little boy. I can't endure it; I shall die; I will kill myself. *He* told grandmamma that I was a good-for-nothing, and now she is ill, and she will die because of me. I—for God's sake, flog me! why torture me for it?"

Tears suffocated me. I seated myself on the divan, utterly powerless to say more, and dropped my head on his knees, sobbing so that it seemed to me that I should die that very minute.

"What are you crying about, baby?" said papa sympathetically, as he bent over me.

"*He* is my tyrant—tormentor. I shall die; nobody loves me!" I could hardly speak, and I began to fall into convulsions.

Papa took me in his arms and carried me into the bedroom. I fell asleep. When I awoke, it was very late. A single candle was burning near my bed, and our family doctor, Mimi, and Liubotchka were sitting in the room. It was evident from their faces, that they feared for my health; but I felt so well and light after my twelve hours' sleep, that I could have leaped from the bed, had it not been disagreeable for me to disturb their belief in my severe illness.

CHAPTER XVII

HATRED

YES, it was a genuine feeling of hatred. Not that hatred which is only depicted in romances, and in which I do not believe—hatred which finds delight in doing evil to mankind ; but that hatred which inspires you with an unconquerable aversion to a person who nevertheless deserves your respect ; which makes his hair, his neck, his walk, the sound of his voice, his every limb, his every motion, repulsive to you, and at the same time attracts you to him by some incomprehensible power, and forces you to watch his slightest acts. This feeling I experienced towards St. Jérôme.

St. Jérôme had lived with us for a year and a half. Judging the man now, in cold blood, I find that he was a fine Frenchman, but a Frenchman in the most thorough sense. He was not stupid : he was tolerably well educated, and he conscientiously fulfilled his duties toward us ; but he possessed the distinctive traits which are peculiar to all his countrymen, and which are so repugnant to the Russian character—egotism, vanity, impudence, and unmannerly self-confidence. All this displeased me greatly.

Of course grandamma explained to him her views on corporal punishment, and he did not dare to whip us ; but in spite of this, he often threatened us, especially me, with the rod, and pronounced the word *fouetter* (as if it were *fouatter*) in a very repulsive manner, and with an intonation which

seemed to indicate that it would afford him the greatest satisfaction to flog me.

I did not fear the pain of punishment at all, never having experienced it; but the thought alone that St. Jérôme might strike me put me into a state of suppressed rage and despair.

It had happened that Karl Ivanitch, in a moment of vexation, had reduced us to order either with a ruler or his braces, but I recall this without the slightest anger. Even at the time of which I speak (when I was fourteen), if Karl Ivanitch had chanced to flog me, I should have borne his chastisement with perfect composure. I loved Karl Ivanitch. I remembered him from the time when I remembered myself, and was accustomed to him as a member of my family; but St. Jérôme was a haughty, self-conceited man, for whom I felt no sentiment but that involuntary respect with which all *grown-up* people inspired me. Karl Ivanitch was a ridiculous old man, a kind of man-servant whom I heartily loved, but placed beneath myself in my childish comprehension of social classes.

St. Jérôme, on the contrary, was a handsome, cultivated young dandy, who tried to stand on an equality with everyone.

Karl Ivanitch always scolded and punished us coolly. It was evident that he regarded it as a necessary but disagreeable duty. St. Jérôme, on the other hand, liked to *pose* in the rôle of an instructor. It was plain, when he punished us, that he did so more for his own satisfaction than for our good. He was carried away by his own greatness. His elegant French phrases, which he uttered with strong emphasis on the last syllable, with circumflex accents, were inexpressibly repugnant to me. When Karl Ivanitch got angry, he simply said, "Puppets' play! little frolicsome rascal!" St. Jérôme, on the other hand, called us "worthless fellows, vile scapegraces," and so forth, names which deeply wounded my self-love.

Karl Ivanitch put us on our knees, with our faces in a corner ; and the punishment consisted of the physical pain incident to such an attitude. St. Jérôme threw out his chest, and shouted, with a majestic wave of the hand, and in a tragic voice, "On your knees !" made us kneel with our faces towards him, and beg his pardon. The punishment consisted in humiliation.

I was not punished, and no one so much as mentioned to me what had happened ; but I could not forget all that I had undergone—despair, shame, terror, and hate—in those two days. In spite of the fact that St. Jérôme, from that time forth, seemed to give up all hopes of me, and hardly concerned himself with me at all, I could not accustom myself to look upon him with indifference. Every time that our eyes met by accident, it seemed to me that enmity was far too plainly expressed in my glance, and I hastened to assume an expression of indifference ; but then it seemed to me that he understood my hypocrisy, and I blushed and turned quite away.

In a word, it was inexpressibly disagreeable to me to have any relations whatever with him.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MAIDS' ROOM

I FELT more and more lonely, and solitary meditation and observation formed my principal delights. The subject of my meditations I will treat of in a succeeding chapter; but the chief theatre of my observations was the maids' room, in which a very absorbing and touching romance, for me, took place. The heroine of this romance was Mascha, of course. She was in love with Vasili, who had known her when she lived out of service, and had promised to marry her at that time. Fate, which had parted them five years before, had again brought them together in grand-mamma's house, but had placed a barrier in the way of their mutual love in the person of Nikolai (Mascha's uncle), who would not hear of his niece's marriage with Vasili, whom he called an *unsuitable and dissipated man*.

The effect of this obstacle was to cause the hitherto cold-blooded and negligent Vasili to suddenly fall in love with Mascha; and he loved her in a way of which only a house-serf from the tailors' corps, with a pink shirt and pomaded hair, is capable.

In spite of the fact that the exhibitions of his love were exceedingly strange, and unsuitable (for instance, when he met Mascha, he always tried to cause her pain, and either pinched her, or slapped her, or hugged her with such force that she could hardly draw her breath), his affection was genuine, which was proved by the circumstance

that from the day when Nikolai finally refused him his niece's hand, Vasili took to drinking from grief, and began to loiter about the drinking-houses, create disturbances, and, in a word, to conduct himself so badly, that more than once he subjected himself to scandalous correction by the police. But this behaviour and its results appeared to constitute a merit in Mascha's eyes, and increased her love for him. When Vasili was in *retirement*, Mascha wept for days together without drying her eyes, complained of her bitter fate to Gascha (who took a lively interest in the affairs of the unhappy lovers); and, scorning the scoldings and beatings of her uncle, she stole away to the police-station on the sly to visit and comfort her friend.

Be not angry, reader, at the society to which I am introducing you. If the chords of love and sympathy have not grown weak within your soul, sounds to which they will respond will be found in the maids' room. Whether it please you or not to follow me, I shall betake myself to the landing on the staircase, from which I could see all that went on in the maids' room. There is the bench on which they stand; the flat-iron, the pasteboard doll with a broken nose, the little wash-tub, and the hand-basin; there is the window-sill upon which are heaped in confusion a bit of black wax, a skein of silk, a green cucumber which has been bitten, and a bonbon box; there, also, is the large red table, upon which, upon a bit of sewing which is begun, lies a brick wrapped in calico, and behind which *she* sits, in my favourite pink linen dress and blue kerchief, which particularly attracts my attention. She sews, pausing now and then in order to scratch her head with her needle, or adjust a candle; and I gaze and think, Why was she not born a lady, with those bright blue eyes, that huge golden braid of hair, and plump bosom? How it would have become her to sit in the drawing-room, in a cap with pink ribbons, and a deep red gown, not

such as Mimi has, but like the one I saw on the Tversky boulevard! She would have embroidered at her frame, and I might have watched her in the mirror; and I would have done everything she wanted, whatever it might have been: I would have handed her her mantle and her hood myself.

And what a drunken face and disgusting figure that Vasili has in his tight coat, worn above that dirty pink shirt, which hangs out! At every movement of his body, at every bend of his spine, I seem to perceive the indisputable signs of the revolting punishment which had overtaken him.

"What, Vasya! again?" said Mascha, sticking her needle into the cushion, but not raising her head to greet Vasili as he entered.

"And what of it? Will any good come of *him*?" retorted Vasili. "If I had only decided on something alone! but now I shall be ruined all for nothing, and all through *him*."

"Will you have some tea?" said Nadezhda, another maid.

"I thank you humbly. And why does that thief, your uncle, hate me? Why? Because I have clothes of my own, because of my pride, because of my walk. Enough. There you have it!" concluded Vasili, with a wave of the hand.

"One must be obedient," said Mascha, biting off her thread, "and you are so"—

"I have no property, that's where it is!"

At that moment the sound of a closing door resounded from grandmamma's room, and Gascha's grumbling voice approaching the staircase.

"Go try to please her, when she doesn't know herself what she wants. Cursed good-for-nothing jail-bird! May the Lord forgive my sins, if for that alone," she muttered, flourishing her arms.

"My respects, Agafya Mikhailovna," said Vasili, rising to greet her.

"Well, so you are there! I don't want your

respects,' she replied grimly, staring at him. "And why do you come here? Is the maids' room a place for men to come?"

"I wanted to inquire after your health," said Vasili timidly.

"I shall soon expire, that's the state of my health," screamed Agafya Mikhailovna, still more angrily, and at the top of her voice.

Vasili laughed.

"There's nothing to laugh at, and if I say that you are to take yourself off, then march! See, that heathen wants to marry, the low fellow! Now march, be off!"

And Agafya went stamping to her room, and slammed the door so violently that the glass in the windows rattled.

She was audible for a long time behind the partition, scolding at everything and everybody, cursing her existence, hurling her effects about, and pulling the ears of her beloved cat; finally the door opened a little, and the cat was swung out by her tail, mewing piteously.

"Evidently I had better come another time to drink tea," said Vasili in a whisper; "farewell until a pleasant meeting."

"Never mind," said Nadezhda with a wink, "I will go and see to the samovar."

"Yes, and I'll made an end of it once for all," continued Vasili, seating himself close to Mascha, as soon as Nadezhda had left the room.

"I'll either go straight to the Countess, and say, 'Thus and so is the state of things,' or else—I'll give up everything, and run away to the ends of the earth, by God!"

"And how can I remain?"

"I am only sorry for you, and you should have been free, my little dove, lo-o-ng ago, so surely as God lives."

"Why don't you bring me your shirts to wash, Vasya?" said Mascha after a momentary silence:

CHAPTER XIX

BOYHOOD

I CAN scarcely believe what were the favorite and most constant subjects of my meditations during my boyhood—they were so incompatible with my age and position. But, in my opinion, incompatibility between a man's position and his moral activity is the truest proof of sincerity.

During the course of the year, when I led an isolated moral life, concentrated within myself, all the abstract questions concerning the destination of man, the future life, the immortality of the soul, had presented themselves to me ; and, with all the fervor of inexperience, my weak, childish mind endeavoured to solve these questions, the presentation of which represents the highest stage to which the mind of man can attain, but the solution of which is not granted to him.

It seems to me that the human mind, in every separate individual, traverses the same path during development by which it is developed in whole races ; that the thoughts which serve as a foundation for the various philosophical theories form the inalienable attributes of the mind ; but that every man has recognized them, with more or less clearness, even before he knew of the philosophical theories.

These thoughts presented themselves to my mind with such clearness, and in such a striking light, that I even tried to apply them to life, fancying that I was the *first* to discover such great and useful truths.

Once the thought occurred to me, that happiness

does not depend upon external conditions, but on our relations to them ; the man, after he is accustomed to endure suffering, cannot be unhappy, and, in order to accustom myself to labor, I held Tatischev's lexicon for five minutes in my outstretched hands, in spite of dreadful pain, or I went into the garret and castigated myself on the bare back with a rope so severely that tears sprang involuntarily to my eyes.

On another occasion, remembering, all of a sudden, that death awaited me at any hour, at any moment, I made up my mind, not understanding how people had hitherto failed to understand it, that man can be happy only by making use of the present, and not thinking of the future ; and for three days, under the influence of this thought, I neglected my lessons, and did nothing but lie on the bed, and enjoy myself by reading a romance and eating gingerbread with Kronoff honey, for which I spent the last money I had.

On another occasion, while standing before the blackboard engaged in drawing various figures upon it with chalk, I was suddenly struck by the thought : Why is symmetry pleasing to the eye ? What is symmetry ?

It is an inborn feeling, I answered myself. But on what is it founded ? Is there symmetry in everything in life ? On the contrary, here is life. And I drew an oval figure on the blackboard. After life the soul passes into eternity. And from one side of the oval, I drew a line which extended to the very edge of the board. Why not another similar line from the other side ? Yes, and, as a matter of fact, what kind of eternity is that which is on one side only ? for we certainly have existed before this life, although we have lost the memory of it.

This reasoning, which appeared to me extremely novel and lucid, and whose thread I can now catch with difficulty, pleased me excessively, and I took a

CHAPTER XX

VOLODYA

YES, the farther I proceed in the description of this period of my life, the more painful and difficult does it become for me. Rarely, rarely, amid the memories of this period, do I find moments of the genuine warmth of feeling which so brilliantly and constantly illumined the beginning of my life. I feel an involuntary desire to pass as quickly as possible over the desert of boyhood, and attain that happy epoch when a truly tender, noble sentiment of friendship lighted up the conclusion of this period of growth, and laid the foundation for a new epoch, full of charm and poetry—the epoch of adolescence.

I shall not trace my recollections hour by hour ; but I will cast a quick glance at the principal ones, from that time until my connection with a remarkable man, who exercised a decided and beneficial influence upon my character and course.

Volodya will enter the university in a few days. Separate masters come for him ; and I listen with envy and involuntary respect as he taps the blackboard boldly with the chalk, and talks of functions, and sinuses, and co-ordinates, and so on, which seem to me the expression of unattainable wisdom. But one Sunday, after dinner, all the teachers and two professors assemble in grandmamma's room : and in the presence of papa and several guests they review the university examination, in the course of which Volodya, to grandmamma's great joy, exhibits remarkable learning. Questions on various

subjects are also put to me ; but I make a very poor show, and the professors evidently endeavour to conceal my ignorance before grandmamma, which confuses me still more. However, very little attention is paid to me ; I am only fifteen, consequently there is still a year to my examination. Volodya only comes downstairs at dinner-time, but spends the whole day and even the evenings upstairs in his occupations, not of necessity, but at his own desire. He is extremely vain, and does not want to pass merely a mediocre examination, but a distinguished one.

But now the day of the first examination has arrived. Volodya puts on his blue coat with brass buttons, his gold watch, and lacquered boots ; papa's phaeton is brought up to the door. Nikolai throws aside the apron, and Volodya and St. Jérôme drive off to the university. The girls, especially Katenka, look out of the window at Volodya's fine figure as he seats himself in the carriage, with joyous and rapturous faces ; and papa says, " God grant it ! God grant it ! " and grandmamma, who has also dragged herself to the window, makes the sign of the cross over Volodya, with tears in her eyes, until the phaeton disappears round the corner of the lane, and says something in a whisper.

Volodya returns. All inquire impatiently, " Well — was it good ? how much ? " — But it is already evident from his beaming face that it is good. Volodya has received five. On the following day he is accompanied by the same anxiety and wishes for his success, and received with the same impatience and joy. Thus nine days pass. On the tenth day, the last and most difficult examination of all awaits him — the Law of God ; and all of us stand at the window and wait for him with the greatest impatience. Two hours have already elapsed, and still Volodya has not returned.

" Heavens ! my dears ! here they are ! here

"they are!" screams Liubotchka, with her face glued to the pane.

And, in fact, Volodya is sitting beside St. Jérôme in the phaeton, but dressed no longer in his blue coat and grey cap, but in student uniform, with blue embroidered collar, three-cornered hat, and a gilt dagger by his side.

"Oh, if you were only alive!" shrieks grand-mamma, when she beholds Volodya in his uniform, and falls into a swoon.

Volodya runs into the vestibule with a beaming face, kisses me, Liubotchka, Mimi, and Katenka, who blushes to her very ears. Volodya is beside himself with joy. And how handsome he is in his uniform! How becoming his blue collar is to his black whiskers, which are almost sprouting! What a long, slender waist he has, and what a fine gait! On that memorable day, all dine in grand-mamma's room. Joy beams from every countenance; and after dinner, at dessert, the butler, with politely majestic but merry countenance, brings in a bottle of champagne, enveloped in a napkin. Grandmamma drinks champagne, for the first time since mamma's death; she drinks a whole glass, as she congratulates Volodya, and she weeps again with joy as she looks at him. Volodya drives out of the court-yard in his own equipage now, receives his acquaintances in his own apartments, smokes tobacco, goes to balls; and I even saw him and his companions, on one occasion, drink up two bottles of champagne in his room, and at every glass propose the healths of some mysterious personages, and dispute as to which one the bottom of the bottle belonged to. But he dines regularly at home, and sits in the boudoir after dinner, as before, and is for ever engaged in some mysterious discussion with Katenka; but so far as I can hear—for I do not take part in their conversation—they are merely talking of the heroes and heroines of the novels which they have read, of love and jealousy; and I

CHAPTER XXI

KATENKA AND LIUBOTCHKA

KATENKA is sixteen ; she is grown up ; the angularity of form, the timidity and awkwardness of movement, peculiar to girls in the age of transition, have made way for the harmonious freshness and grace of a newly blown flower. But she has not changed : the same bright blue eyes and smiling glance, the same little straight nose which forms almost one line with the brow, with its strong nostrils, and the tiny mouth with its brilliant smile, the dimples on the rosy, transparent cheeks, the same little white hands ; and for some reason, as heretofore, the expression, a *pure girl*, fits her peculiarly well. The only new thing about her is her heavy blonde hair, which she wears in the fashion of grown-up people : and her bosom, whose advent plainly delights yet shames her.

Although Liubotchka has grown up and always studied with her, she is quite a different girl in every respect.

Liubotchka is small of stature, and in consequence of the rickets her legs are still crooked, and her figure is very ugly. The only pretty thing about her face is her eyes, and they are really very beautiful—large and black, and with such an indefinably attractive expression of dignity and simplicity that it is impossible not to remark them. Liubotchka is natural and simple in everything. Katenka does not wish to be like anyone else in any respect. Liubotchka's gaze is always straight forward ; and sometimes she fixes her great black

eyes on a person, and keeps them there so long that she is reproved and told that it is not polite.

Katenka, on the other hand, drops her eyelashes, draws her lips together, and declares that she is short-sighted, though I know very well that her sight is perfectly good. Liubotchka does not like to attitudinize before strangers; and when any of the guests begin to kiss her, she pouts, and says that she cannot endure *sentiment*. Katenka, on the contrary, becomes particularly affectionate with Mimi in the presence of guests, and loves to promenade in the hall, in the embrace of some girl. Liubotchka is a terrible laughier; and sometimes, in outburst of merriment, she flourishes her hands, and runs about the room. Katenka, on the contrary, covers her mouth with her hands or her handkerchief when she begins to laugh. Liubotchka is dreadfully glad when she succeeds in talking with a grown-up man, and declares that she will certainly marry a hussar; but Katenka says that all men are hateful to her, that she will never marry, and becomes quite a different girl when a man speaks to her, just as though she were afraid of something. Liubotchka is for ever offended with Mimi because they lace her up so tight in corsets that she "can't breathe," and she is fond of eating; but Katenka, on the other hand, often thrusts her finger under the point of her bodice, and shows us how loose it is for her, and she eats very little. Liubotchka loves to draw heads, but Katenka draws only flowers and butterflies. Liubotchka plays Field's concertos perfectly, and some of Beethoven's sonatas. Katenka plays variations and waltzes, retards the time, pounds, uses the pedal incessantly; and before she begins to play anything, she strikes three arpeggio chords.

But Katenka, according to my opinion then, was much more like an adult, and therefore she pleased me far more.

CHAPTER XXII

PAPA

PAPA had been particularly gay since Volodya's entrance to the university, and comes to dine with grandmamma much oftener than usual. Moreover, the cause of his cheerfulness, as I have learned from Nikolai, consists in the fact that he has won a remarkably large amount of money of late. It even happens that he sometimes comes to us in the evening before going to his club, sits down at the piano, gathers us all about him, and sings gypsy songs, accompanying them by stamping his feet in their soft shoes (he cannot bear heels, and never wears them). And then the rapture of his favourite Liubotchka, on her side, who adores him, is worth seeing. Sometimes he comes to the schoolroom, and listens with a stern countenance while I recite my lessons ; but I perceive, from the occasional words with which he endeavours to set me right, that he is but badly acquainted with what I am learning. Sometimes he gives us a sly wink, and makes signs to us, when grandmamma begins to grumble and get into a rage with everybody without cause. "Now it's our turn to catch it, children," he says afterwards. On the whole, he has descended somewhat in my eyes from the unapproachable height upon which my childish imagination had placed him. I kiss his large white hand, with the same feeling of genuine love and respect ; but I already permit myself to think of him, to pass judgment on his acts, and thoughts occur to me in regard to him which frighten me.

Never shall I forget one circumstance which inspired many such thoughts in me, and caused me much moral suffering.

Once, late in the evening, he entered the drawing-room, in his black dress-coat and white waistcoat, in order to carry off Volodya with him to a ball. The latter was dressing in his own room at the time. Grandmother was waiting in her bedroom for Volodya to come and show himself to her (she had a habit of summoning him to her presence before every ball, to inspect him, and to bestow upon him her blessing and instructions). In the hall, which was lighted by one candle only, Mimi and Katenka were pacing to and fro; but Liubotchka was seated at the piano, engaged in memorizing Field's Second Concerto, which was one of mamma's favorite pieces.

Never, in anyone whatever, have I met such an intimate likeness as existed between my sister and my mother. This likeness consisted not in face, nor form, but in some intangible quality—in her hands, in her manner of walking, in peculiarities of voice, and in certain expressions. When Liubotchka got angry, and said, "It won't be allowed for a whole age," she pronounced the words, *a whole age*, which mamma was also accustomed to use, so that it seemed as if one heard them lengthened, who-o-le a-ge. But the likeness was still more remarkable in her playing on the piano, and in all her ways connected with this. She adjusted her dress in exactly the way, and turned her pages from above with her left hand, and pounded the keys with her fist from vexation when she was long in conquering a difficult passage, and said, "Ah, heavens!" and she had that same indescribable tenderness and accuracy of execution, that beautiful execution like Field, which is so well called *jeu perle*, and whose charm all the hocus-pocus of newer pianists cannot make one forget.

Papa entered the room with swift, short steps,

and went up to Liubotchka, who stopped playing when she saw him.

"No, go on playing, Liuba, go on," said he, putting her back in her seat: "you know how I love to hear you."

Liubotchka continued her playing, and papa sat opposite her for a long time, supporting his head on his hand; then he gave his shoulders a sudden twitch, rose, and began to pace the room. Every time that he approached the piano, he paused, and looked intently at Liubotchka. I perceived, from his movements and his manner of walking, that he was excited. After traversing the room several times, he paused behind Liubotchka's seat, kissed her black hair, and then, turning away, he pursued his walk. When Liubotchka had finished her piece, and went up to him with the question, "Is it pretty?" he took her head silently in his hands, and began to kiss her brow and eyes with such tenderness as I had never seen him display.

"Ah, heavens! you are weeping!" said Liubotchka, all at once dropping the chain of his watch, and fixing her great, surprised eyes on his face. "Forgive me, dear papa: I had quite forgotten that that was *mamma's piece*."

"No, my dear, play it as often as possible," he said in a voice which quivered with emotion; "if you only knew how good it is for me to weep with you!"

He kissed her once more, and, endeavouring to overcome his emotion, he twitched his shoulders, and went out of the door which led to the corridor and Volodya's room.

"Waldemar! Will you be ready soon?" he cried, halting midway in the corridor. At that moment, Mascha the maid passed him, and, seeing the master, she dropped her eyes, and tried to avoid him. He stopped her. "You grow prettier and prettier," he said, bending over her.

Mascha blushed, and drooped her head still lower. "Permit me," she whispered.

"Waldemar, are you nearly ready?" repeated papa, twitching himself and coughing, when Mascha passed, and he caught sight of me.

I love my father; but the kind of man exists independently of the heart, and often mixes within itself thoughts which are insulting to him, with feelings both incomprehensible and stern concerning him. And such thoughts come to me, although I strive to drive them away.

CHAPTER XXIII

GRANDMAMMA

GRANDMAMMA grows weaker from day to day; her bell, Gascha's grumbling voice and the slamming of doors are heard more frequently in her room, and she no longer receives us in the library in her reclining-chair, but in her bedroom in her high bed with its lace-trimmed pillows. I perceive, on saluting her, that there is a pale, yellowish, shining swelling on her hand, and that oppressive odour in the chamber which I had observed five years before in mamma's room. The doctor comes to the house three times a day, and several consultations have been held. But her character, her haughty and ceremonious intercourse with all members of the household, particularly with papa, is not altered in the least; she enunciates her words, elevates her brows, and says, "my dear,"* in exactly the same manner as usual.

But, for several days now, we have not been admitted to her; and once in the morning St. Jérôme proposes to me that I shall go to ride with Liubotchka and Katenka during lesson hours. Although I notice, as I take my seat in the sleigh, that the street in front of grandmamma's windows is strewn with straw, and that several people in blue overcoats are standing about our gate, I cannot in the least understand why I have been sent to ride at this unusual hour. During our entire ride on that day, Liubotchka and I are, for

Moi miluii, equivalent to *mon cher*, and not always a term of endearment.

some reason, in that particularly cheerful frame of mind when every occurrence, every word, every motion, excites one's laughter.

A pedlar who offers us his wares stops our way, and we simply laugh at him. A ragged vanka* overtakes our sleigh at a gallop, flourishing the ends of his reins, and we shout with laughter. Philip's knout has caught in the runners of the sleigh; he turns around, and says, "Alas!" and we die with laughter. Mimi remarks, with a face of displeasure, that only *stupid people laugh* without cause; and Liubotchka, all rosy with the strain of repressed laughter, casts a sidelong glance at me. Our eyes meet, and we break out into such Homeric laughter, that the tears come to our eyes, and we are in no condition to repress the bursts of merriment which are suffocating us. We have no sooner quieted down to some extent, than I glance at Liubotchka, and utter a private little word which has been in fashion for some time among us, and which always calls forth a laugh; and again we break out.

On our return home, I have but just opened my mouth in order to make a very fine grimace at Liubotchka, when my eyes are startled by the black cover of a coffin leaning against one half of our entrance door, and my mouth retains its distorted shape.

"Your grandmother is dead," says St. Jérôme, coming to meet us with a pale face.

During the whole time that grandmamma's body remains in the house, I experience an oppressive feeling, a fear of death, as if the dead body were alive, and unpleasantly reminding me that I must die some time—a feeling which it is usual, for some reason, to confound with grief. I do not mourn for grandmamma, and, in fact, there can hardly be anyone who sincerely mourns her. Although the house is full of mourning visitors, no

Cabman.

one sorrows for her death, except one individual, whose wild grief impresses me in an indescribable manner. And this person is Gascha, the maid. She goes off to the garret, locks herself up there, weeps incessantly, curses herself, tears her hair, will not listen to advice, and declares that death is the only consolation left for her after the death of her beloved mistress.

I repeat once more, that inconsistency in matters of feeling is the most trustworthy sign of genuineness.

Grandmother is no more, but memories and various remarks about her still live in her house. These remarks refer especially to the will which she made before her end, and the contents of which no one knows, with the exception of her executor, Prince Ivan Ivanitch. I observe some excitement among grandmamma's people, and I frequently overhear remarks as to whose property so and so will become; and I must confess that I think, with involuntary joy, of the fact that we shall receive a legacy.

At the end of six weeks, Nikolai, who is the daily newspaper of our establishment, informs me that grandmamma has left all her property to Liubotchka intrusting the guardianship until her marriage, not to papa, but to Prince Ivan Ivanitch.

CHAPTER XXIV

I

ONLY a few months remain before my entrance to the university. I am studying well. I not only await my teachers without terror, but even feel a certain pleasure in my lessons.

I am cheerful. I can recite the lesson I have learned, clearly and accurately. I am preparing for the mathematical faculty; and this choice, to tell the truth, has been made by me simply because the words, sines, tangents, differentials, integrals, and so forth, please me extremely.

I am much shorter of stature than Volodya, broad-shouldered and fleshy, homely as ever, and worried about it as usual. I try to appear original. One thing consoles me: that is, that papa once said to me that I had a *sensible phiz*, and I am fully convinced of it.

St. Jérôme is satisfied with me; and I not only do not hate him, but, when he occasionally remarks that *with my gifts* and *my mind* it is a shame that I do not do thus and so, it even seems to me that I love him.

My observations on the maids' room ceased long ago; I am ashamed to hide myself behind a door, and, moreover, my conviction that Mascha loves Vasili has cooled me somewhat, I must confess. Vasili's marriage, the permission for which, at his request, I obtain from papa, effects a final cure of this unhappy passion in me.

When the young pair come, with bonbons on a tray, to thank papa, and Mascha in a blue-ribboned

CHAPTER XXV

VOLODYA'S FRIENDS

ALTHOUGH in the company of Volodya's acquaintances I played a rôle which wounded my self-love, I liked to sit in his room when he had visitors, and silently observed all that took place there.

The most frequent of all Volodya's guests were Adjutant Dubkoff, and a student, Prince Nekhliudoff. Dubkoff was a small, muscular, dark-complexioned man, no longer in his first youth, and rather short-legged, but not bad-looking, and always gay. He was one of those narrow-minded persons to whom their own narrow-mindedness is particularly agreeable, who are not capable of viewing subjects from different sides, and who are continually allowing themselves to be carried away with something. The judgment of such people is one-sided and erroneous, but always open-hearted and captivating. Even their narrow egotism seems pardonable and attractive, for some reason. Besides this, Dubkoff possessed a double charm for Volodya and me—a military exterior, and, most of all, the age, with which young people have a habit of confounding their ideas of what is *comme il faut*, which is very highly prized during these years. Moreover, Dubkoff really was what is called a man *comme il faut*. One thing displeased me : and that was, that Volodya seemed at times to be ashamed, in his presence, of my most innocent acts, and, most of all, my youth.

Nekhliudoff was not handsome : little gray eyes,

a low, rough forehead, disproportionately long arms and legs, could certainly not be called beautiful. The only handsome thing about him was his unusually lofty stature, the delicate coloring of his face, and his very fine teeth. But his countenance acquired such a character of originality and energy from his narrow, brilliant eyes, and the expression of his smile which changed from sternness to childish indefiniteness, that it was impossible not to take note of him.

He was, it appeared, excessively modest, for every trifle made him flush up to his very ears ; but his shyness did not resemble mine. The more he reddened, the more determination did his face express. He seemed angry with himself for his weakness. Although he seemed very friendly with Dubkoff and Volodya, it was worthy of note that chance alone had connected him with them. Their views were entirely different. Volodya and Dubkoff seemed afraid of everything which even resembled serious discussion and feeling ; Nekhliudoff, on the contrary, was an enthusiast in the highest degree, and often entered into discussion of philosophical questions and of feelings, in spite of ridicule. Volodya and Dubkoff were fond of talking about the objects of their love (and they fell in love, all of a sudden, with several, and both with the same persons) : Nekhliudoff, on the contrary, always became seriously angry when they hinted at his love for a *little red-haired girl*.

Volodya and Dubkoff often permitted themselves to make sport of their relatives : Nekhliudoff, on the contrary, could be driven quite beside himself by uncomplimentary allusions to his aunt, for whom he cherished a sort of rapturous reverence. Volodya and Dubkoff used to go off somewhere after supper without Nekhliudoff, and they called him a *pretty little girl*.

Prince Nekhliudoff impressed me from the first by his conversation as well as by his appearance.

But although I found much in his tastes that was common to mine—or perhaps just for that reason—the feeling with which he inspired me when I saw him for the first time was extremely hostile.

I was displeased by his quick glance, his firm voice, his haughty look, but most of all by the utter indifference towards me which he exhibited. Often, during a conversation, I had a terrible desire to contradict him ; I wanted to quarrel with him to punish him for his pride, to show him that I was sensible, although he would not pay the slightest attention to me. Diffidence restrained me.

CHAPTER XXVI

DISCUSSIONS

VOLODYA was lying with his feet on the divan, and leaning on his elbow; he was engaged in reading a French romance, when I went to his room after my evening lessons according to custom. He raised his head for a second to glance at me, and again turned to his reading; the most simple and natural movement possible, but it made me blush. It seemed to me that his glance expressed the question why I had come there; and his hasty bend of the head, a desire to conceal from me the meaning of the glance." This tendency to attribute significance to the simplest movement constituted one of my characteristic traits at that age. I walked up to the table, and took a book; but before I began to read it, it occurred to me how ridiculous it was not to say anything to each other, when we had not seen each other all day.

"Shall you be at home this evening?"

"I don't know. Why?"

"Because," said I, perceiving I could not start a conversation. I took my book, and began to read.

It was strange that Volodya and I would pass whole hours in silence, face to face, but that it required only the presence of a third person, even if taciturn, to start the most interesting and varied discussion. We felt that we knew each other too well; and too intimate or too slight knowledge of each other prevents approach.

"Is Volodya at home?" said Dubasoff's voice in the vestibule.

"Yes," said Volodya, lowering his feet, and laying his book on the table.

Dubkoff and Nekhliudoff entered the room in their coats and hats.

"What do you say, Volodya? shall we go to the theatre?"

"No, I don't want to," replied Volodya, turning red.

"Well, that's an idea! Pray let us go."

"I haven't any ticket."

"You can get as many tickets as you want at the entrance."

"Wait, I'll come directly," said Volodya, yielding, and he left the room with a twitch of his shoulders.

I knew that Volodya wanted very much to go to the theatre, whither Dubkoff invited him; that he only refused because he had no money; and that he had gone to borrow five roubles of the butler until his next instalment of allowance became due.

"How are you, *Diplomat*?" said Dubkoff, giving me his hand.

Volodya's friends called me the diplomat, because once, after a dinner with my grandmother, in speaking of our future, she had said, in their presence, that Volodya was to be a soldier, and that she hoped to see me a diplomat, in a black dress-coat, and with my hair dressed *à la coq*, which, according to her views, constituted an indispensable part of the diplomatic profession.

"Where has Volodya gone?" Nekhliudoff asked.

"I don't know," I replied, reddening at the thought that they probably guessed why Volodya had quitted the room.

"He can't have any money! is that so? oh, *Diplomat*!" he added with conviction, displaying his smile. "I haven't any money either; have you, Dubkoff?"

"We shall see," said Dubkoff, pulling out his purse, and very carefully feeling a few bits of small

change with his short fingers. "Here's a five-kopek bit, and here's a twenty-kopek piece, and f-f-f-u!" said he, making a comical gesture with his hand.

At that moment Volodya entered the room.

"Well, shall we go?"

"No."

"How ridiculous you are!" said Nekhliudoff. "Why don't you say that you haven't any money? Take my ticket if you like."

"But what will you do?"

"He will go to his cousin's box," said Dubkoff.

"No, I will not go at all."

"Why?"

"Because, as you know, I don't like to sit in a box."

"Why?"

"I don't like it; it makes me feel awkward."

"The same old thing again! I don't understand how you can feel awkward where everyone is glad to have you. It's absurd, my dear fellow."

"What am I to do, if I am timid? I am convinced that you have never blushed in your life, but I do it every moment for the veriest trifles," turning crimson as he spoke.

"Do you know the cause of your timidity? An excess of self-love, my dear fellow," said Dubkoff in a patronizing tone.

"An excess of self-love, indeed!" said Nekhliudoff, touched to the quick. "On the contrary, it is because I have too little self-love: it seems to me that things displease and bore me—because"—

"Dress yourself, Volodya," said Dubkoff, seizing him by the shoulders, and pulling off his coat. "Ignat, dress your master!"

"Because, it often happens to me,"—went on Nekhliudoff.

But Dubkoff was no longer listening to him. "Tra-la-ta-ra-ra-la-la," and he hummed an air.

"You have not escaped," said Nekhliudoff; "and I will prove to you that shyness does not proceed from self-love at all."

"You will prove it if you come with us."

"I have said that I would not go."

"Well, stay, then, and prove it to the diplomat; and he shall tell us when we come back."

"I will prove it," retorted Nekhliudoff, with childish obstinacy; "but come back as soon as you can."

"What do you think? am I vain?" he said, seating himself beside me.

Although I had formed an opinion on that point, I was so intimidated by this unexpected appeal, that I could not answer him very promptly.

"Yes, I think so," I said, feeling that my voice trembled and the color covered my face at the thought that the time had come to show him that *I was intelligent*—"I think that every man is vain, and that everything a man does is done from vanity."

"What is vanity, in your opinion?" said Nekhliudoff, smiling somewhat disdainfully, as it struck me.

"Vanity—self-love"—said I, "is the conviction that I am better and wiser than anybody else."

"But how can everybody entertain that conviction?"

"I do not know whether I am correct or not, but no one except myself confesses to it: I am persuaded that I am wiser than anyone in the world, and I am persuaded that you are convinced of the same thing."

"No, I am the first to say of myself, that I have met people whom I have acknowledged to be wiser than myself," said Nekhliudoff.

"Impossible," I answered with conviction.

"Do you really think so?" said Nekhliudoff, looking intently at me.

And then an idea occurred to me, to which I immediately gave utterance

“ I will prove it to you. Why do we love ourselves more than others? Because we consider ourselves better than others, more worthy of love. If we considered others better than ourselves, then we should love them more than ourselves, and that never happens. Even if it does happen, I am right all the same,” I added, with an involuntary smile of vanity.

Nekhludoff remained silent for a moment.

“ I never thought that you were so clever ! ” he said with such a sweet, good-natured smile, that it seemed to me all at once that I was perfectly happy.

Praise acts so powerfully not only on the feelings but on the mind of man, that under its pleasant influence it seemed to me that I became much more clever, and ideas occurred to me one after the other with unusual swiftness. From vanity we passed, without noticing it, to love ; and discussion on this theme seemed inexhaustible. Although our judgments might seem utter nonsense to an uninterested listener—so unintelligible and one-sided were they,—they possessed a lofty significance for us. Our souls were so agreeably attuned in harmony, that the slightest touch upon any chord in one found an echo in the other. We took pleasure in this mutual echoing of the divers chords which we touched in our discussion. It seemed to us that time and words were lacking to express to each other the thoughts which sought utterance.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BEGINNING OF FRIENDSHIP

FROM that time, rather strange but very agreeable relations existed between me and Dmitri Nekhliudoff. In the presence of strangers, he paid hardly any attention to me ; but as soon as we chanced to be alone, we seated ourselves in some quiet nook, and began to discuss, forgetful of everything, and perceiving not how the time flew.

We talked of the future life, and of the arts, and of the government service, and marriage, and bringing up children ; and it never entered our heads that all we said was the most frightful nonsense. It never occurred to us, because the nonsense we talked was wise and nice nonsense ; and in youth one still prizes wisdom, and believes in it. In youth, all the powers of the soul are directed towards the future ; and that future assumes such varied, vivid, and enchanting forms under the influence of hope, founded, not upon experience of the past, but upon the fancied possibilities of happiness, that the mere conceptions and dreams of future bliss form a genuine happiness at that age, when shared. In the metaphysical discussions which formed one of the chief subjects of our conversation, I loved the moment when thoughts succeed each other more and more swiftly, and, growing ever more abstract, finally attain such a degree of mistiness that one sees no possibility of expressing them, and, supposing that one is saying what he thinks, he says something

entirely different. I loved the moment, when, soaring higher and higher into the realms of thought, one suddenly comprehends all its infiniteness, and confesses the impossibility of proceeding farther.

Once, during the carnival, Nekliudoff was so absorbed in various pleasures, that, although he came to the house several times a day, he never once spoke to me; and this so offended me, that he again seemed to me a haughty and disagreeable man. I only waited for an opportunity to show him that I did not value his society in the least, and entertained no special affection for him.

On the first occasion after the carnival that he wanted to talk to me, I said that I was obliged to prepare my lessons, and went upstairs; but a quarter of an hour later, someone opened the schoolroom door, and Nekliudoff entered.

"Do I disturb you?" said he.

"No," I replied, although I wanted to say that I really was busy.

"Then why did you leave volodya's room? We haven't had a talk for a long while. And I have become so used to it, that it seems as if something were missing."

My vexation vanished in a moment, and Dmitri again appeared the same kind and charming man as before in my eyes.

"You probably know why I went away," said I.

"Perhaps," he replied, seating himself beside me. "But if I guess it, I cannot say why, but you can," said he.

"I will say it: I went away because I was angry with you—not angry, but vexed. To speak plainly, I am always afraid that you will despise me because I am still so very young."

"Do you know why I have become so intimate with you?" he said, replying to my confession with a good-humoured and sensible smile—"why I love you more than people with whom I am better acquainted, and with whom I have more in

common? I settled it at once. You have a wonderfully rare quality—frankness.”

“Yes, I always say just the very things that I am ashamed to acknowledge,” I said, confirming him, “but only to those people whom I can trust.”

“Yes; but in order to trust a person, one must be entirely friendly with him, and we are not friends yet, Nicolas. You remember that we discussed friendship: in order to be true friends, it is necessary to trust one another.”

“To trust that what I tell you, you will not repeat to anyone,” said I. “But the most important, the most interesting thoughts, are just those which we would not tell each other for anything!”

“And what loathsome thoughts! such thoughts, that, if we knew that we should be forced to acknowledge them, we should never have dared to think them.”

“Do you know what idea has come to me, Nicolas?” he added, rising from his chair, and rubbing his hands, with a smile. “*Do it*, and you will see how beneficial it will be for both of us. Let us give our word to confess everything to each other: we shall know each other, and we shall not be ashamed; but, in order that we may not fear strangers, let us take a vow *never* to say *anything* to *anybody* about each other. Let us do this.”

And we actually *did it*. What came of it, I shall relate hereafter.

Karr has said, that, in every attachment, there are two sides: one loves, while the other permits himself to be loved; one kisses, the other offers the cheek. This is perfectly correct; and in our friendship I kissed, but Dmitri offered his cheek; but he was also ready to kiss me. We loved equally, because we knew and valued each other; but this did not prevent his exercising an influence over me, and my submitting to him.

Of course, under the influence of Nekhliudoff, I unconsciously adopted his view, the gist of which consisted in an enthusiastic adoration of the ideal of virtue, and in a belief that man is intended to constantly perfect himself. Then the reformation of all mankind, the annihilation of all popular vices and miseries, appeared a practicable thing. It seemed very simple and easy to reform oneself, to acquire all virtues, and be happy.

But God only knows whether these lofty aspirations of youth were ridiculous, and who was to blame that they were not fulfilled.

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